Quiz Design & Attempt Management

Recommendations & Troubleshooting Tips

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Contents

Common Issues Related to Quiz Usage & Design

Number of questions per page

We recommend that you distribute quiz questions across several pages, as this forces students to save their answers as they progress from one page to the next. This serves to prevent issues related to failed attempts where student answers are lost.

As a general rule, we advise that you have *no more* than 5-10 multiple choice/short answer/true false, etc. type questions per page, and no more than one essay question per page.

The number of questions per page can be controlled from the Layout section when within Edit Settings for a given quiz activity.

Instructors can also reorder questions manually or insert page breaks from the *Order and Paging* tab on the Edit Quiz screen.

How attempts are handled when time expires

The **When time expires** setting applies when a time limit has been enabled on a quiz, and it determines what happens to a student's attempt when time runs out. We recommend that you set this to "Open attempts are submitted automatically" so that the attempt with any saved answers will be submitted. This setting can be found within the *Timing* section of the Edit Settings screen for the quiz, as shown below.

Timing

Open the quiz ⑦	15 ▾	December ▾	2014 ▾	12 ▾	13 ▾	☐ Enable
Close the quiz	15 ▾	December ▾	2014 ▾	12 ▾	13 ▾	☐ Enable
Time limit ⑦	1	hours ▾	☑ Enable			
When time expires ⑦	Open attempts are submitted automatically					

Please note that once a quiz has closed, there is no way to submit an attempt that was in progress on behalf of the student.

Review Options

These settings control what information students can see when they review a quiz attempt or look at quiz reports.

A common mistake instructors make is to leave "Marks" disabled, or only enable Marks to be reviewed after the quiz is closed, but they do not set a *due date* on the quiz.

If no due date was set and "Marks" was not selected for *Immediately after the attempt* **or** *Later, while the quiz is still open* the student will not be able to view their grade for this quiz activity within the gradebook.

Review options ⑦

During the attempt	Immediately after the attempt	Later, while the quiz is still open	After the quiz is closed
☑ The attempt ⑦	☑ The attempt	☑ The attempt	☑ The attempt
☐ Whether correct ⑦	☑ Whether correct	☑ Whether correct	☑ Whether correct
☐ Marks ⑦	☐ Marks	☐ Marks	☑ Marks
☐ Specific feedback ⑦	☑ Specific feedback	☑ Specific feedback	☑ Specific feedback
☐ General feedback ⑦	☑ General feedback	☑ General feedback	☑ General feedback
☐ Right answer ⑦	☐ Right answer	☐ Right answer	☐ Right answer
☐ Overall feedback ⑦	☑ Overall feedback	☑ Overall feedback	☑ Overall feedback

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Browser Security

Within the **Extra Restrictions on Attempts** section on the *Edit Settings* page for a Quiz, it is common to see than an instructor has enabled the "Browser Security" setting.

If "Full screen pop-up with some JavaScript security" is selected:

- The quiz will only start if the student has a JavaScript-enabled web-browser

- The quiz appears in a full screen popup window that covers all the other windows and has no navigation controls

- Students are prevented, as far as is possible, from using facilities like copy and paste

When troubleshooting student issues related to quizzes, it is important to remember that this functionality relies on the presence of a current browser with an up-to-date Java plugin.

We recommend that whenever this setting is enabled, instructors should include a reminder in the description that this quiz uses this feature and they should verify their Java version is up-to-date before attempting the quiz.

Using Quizzes to Administer Essay Exams

As a general rule, we advise against using the Quiz activity to administer exams that include *only* essay questions. Depending on the configuration of the exam, there can be many opportunities for students to encounter issues during an attempt on a quiz using multiple essay questions that require lengthy answers.

Potential Issue	Recommendation(s)
If all essay questions are on one page and a student runs out of time or an error occurs during their attempt, no work will be saved	- Limit the number of essay questions used. - Only place one essay question per page.
Students might compose their answers to questions in a document and return to Moodle to copy/paste their responses into the attempt to discover they were logged out due to inactivity. The time frame for inactivity is typically 2 hours, during which the student was not actively clicking or typing within Moodle. This can happen regardless of the time limit set on the quiz activity itself.	- Encourage students to back-up their answers, but warn them of inactivity period. - Only place one essay question per page, so that students must keep returning to the attempt in Moodle. This way they are saving their answers as the progress AND staying active within the site.
If Browser security settings are enabled, students will not be able to back-up their answers in a document.	Do not enable browser security when using multiple essay questions.

Another common setup instructors try to achieve when designing essay exams is to provide several question and only *require* students to answer a few of them. However, at present there is no setting to mark questions as "optional" or for extra credit.

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Example Scenario: An instructor wishes to have an exam where students complete 5 questions of their choice out of total of 7 short-essay questions.

Unfortunately if you only grade 5 of the 7 questions, the total grade for the quiz is still going to be calculated based on the total number of points and convert that score to a grade out of 100. So if a student earned 80 points across the 5 questions, it would calculate it as 80/140×100=57.14 instead of the desired score of 80 out of 100.

How to achieve the desired result?

Option 1: You could assign full marks to each question the student doesn't answer, but that would require manually overriding the grade for each question within every attempt.

Option 2: Another work-around would involve featuring all of the question options up front in a description and then adding four "blank" questions in which you ask the student to identify the question they are answering.

Option 3: Rather than using a quiz activity, we recommend using an assignment activity where the students can download a document with the questions, type in their answers for the ones they select, and then save and re-upload the document for grading.

Using an assignment doesn't provide the timer functionality, which may be desired, but it does help to avoid issues related to students losing the answers they type directly into the text boxes for each question within the quiz. This method ensures they are composing their work in a Word processor and can retain a copy for themselves. In addition, many instructors find it easier to mark up responses, insert comments, and provide feedback within a document than the plain-text field provided within the quiz.

Using Short Answer Questions

Short answer questions can also be tricky for students. Depending on how the question was created, it may be difficult for students to get the answer correct unless they enter the response exactly as you did.

For example:

Question: *Which two countries border the United States?*

Answer (as entered by the instructor): *Canada, Mexico*

You'd be surprised how many variations of this answer students might enter that are still correct….

- ✓ Mexico, Canada
- ✓ Canada and Mexico
- ✓ Mexico & Canada
- ✓ Canada – Mexico

As a result, we recommend that instructors enter several possible correct variations or use the asterisk character (*) as a wildcard to match any series of characters, so that the student will automatically be marked as correct. Otherwise, the instructor may need to grade this question manually to override the score for responses that are correct, but were not included in the list of acceptable answers.

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In our example above, you could use "Canada*Mexico" and "Mexico*Canada" as your correct answers, which would accept all of the variations we listed before.

Tips for Managing Attempts

Viewing and Deleting Failed Attempts

To view and manage attempts on a quiz, begin by clicking on the link to the quiz in its designated week or topic.

US State Capitals Quiz

Once the quiz is in progress, you will see the number of attempts on this screen, but it is actually a link as well. Click on it to view a chart listing all attempts.

The Quiz Administration>Results>Grades screen allows you to view each attempt's grade, as well as their score for each question.

Clicking on a score for a given question will show you a preview of the question and how the user answered it. Or, you can click on Review attempt link under the student's name to view their entire attempt.

NOTE: If the instructor enabled the shuffle questions setting or questions are being randomized from a large bank of questions, Question 7 for *will not* be the same for each student.

Below are two examples of what an attempt might look like if some sort of error occurred.

	First name / Surname	Email address	State	Started on	Completed	Time taken	Grade/100.00	Q. 1 /20.00	Q. 2 /20.00	Q. 3 /20.00	Q. 4 /20.00	Q. 5 /20.00
☐	Jane Doe Review attempt	jdoe@xyzu.edu	Finished	15 December 2014 5:09 PM	15 December 2014 5:10 PM	30 secs	0.00	✗ 0.00	✗ 0.00	✗ 0.00	✗ 0.00	✗ 0.00
☐	Jane Doe Review attempt	jdoe@xyzu.edu	In progress	15 December 2014 5:10 PM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Sometimes you will see all questions marked incorrectly, or an attempt still shows as "in progress" or "open" when the student reports an issue.

In either case, if this was the student's last attempt (or only one attempt was allowed) you will want to delete it so that they can try again.

To do so, check the box to the left of their name, scroll down toward the bottom of the page and click the *Delete selected attempts* button.

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Re-grading Questions

Let's say that you want to edit a question that students have brought to your attention as having a mistake or being unfair.

To edit this question and re-grade student attempts, follow these steps:

1. Start by going to the Question bank from within the Administration block.
2. Select the category of questions you used for this quiz and check the *Show question text in the question list* option to help you locate the question.
3. Click the edit icon next to the question to make your desired changes.
4. Once finished editing, be sure to scroll down to the bottom and click the *Save Changes* button. (NOTE: If you wish to remove the question entirely, you won't be able to *delete* a question that has been attempted already.)
5. Although the question has been revised, it will still be marked wrong for all of the students who attempted the quiz already. The good news is that Moodle allows you to re-grade all of the attempts. This way, students who were randomly given that question and were marked wrong by mistake will get the point(s) added to their score.
6. From the *Attempts* screen, scroll towards the bottom of the page and click on the *Select all* link. (NOTE: When clicking *Select all*, you are really only selecting the attempts that appear on Page 1. To select all of the attempts made at once, you can change the report display preferences at the top of the page.)
7. Click the *Regrade selected attempts* button. (Shown below)

Select all / Deselect all   Regrade selected attempts   Delete selected attempts

Depending on the number of attempts this can take some time, so be patient!

After it is complete, you can scroll through to make sure that some attempts had a question re-scored and that their overall grade has changed as well.

You will see that the question score has been crossed out with its new point value above, and the final grade will look the same.

Enabling User Overrides

You can set a User Override if you have a situation where you need to extend the deadline, increase the number of attempts, or the time allowed for a particular student. To do so, follow these steps:

1. Click on the link to the quiz and view it.
2. Once you are in the quiz, click on the *User Override* link in that can be found in the Administration block, located under the Quiz Administration heading.
3. On the next screen, click on the "Add user override" button.
4. Search for or select the student from the list of users.
5. Adjust the settings as is necessary for this student.
6. Click the *Save* button to finish, or the *Save and enter another override* button if you need to enable overrides for multiple students.

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