

Best Practices for Online Testing: Technical Tips for Instructors Using Sakai



Choose recommended test settings

To minimize technical problems and deter cheating, the following selections are recommended on the test “Settings” screen in Sakai.

Assessment Introduction

- ✓ **Description/Intro:** Provide good instructions for students here. Students will see this information before they take the test. Helpful information might include: what the test covers, type of questions, reminder about academic honesty, link to tips for avoiding problems, etc.

Delivery Dates

- ✓ Set the date and time the test will become **available** and when it is **due**. A good practice is to restrict availability of tests to 1-2 days. Note: If you allow students to submit tests late, also enter a “retract date” as the final end date after which no one can take the test. (This date will not be shown to students.) If you do NOT accept late tests, leave “retract date” blank, and the due date will be used as the final end date.

Timed Assessment

- ✓ Be sure to **set a time limit** for all important tests! A good practice is to set a time limit that is no longer than 1.5 hours. **BEWARE:** In Sakai, students can enter a test, look at the questions, go away, and come back later to work on it. Setting a time limit gives a restricted window of time for students to complete the test after they first look at it.

Assessment Organization

- ✓ **Navigation:** You can choose either linear access or random access. Note: Linear access means students can move only forward; they cannot go back and review. Random access allows students to go forward and back and jump around in the test using the “Table of Contents” link
- ✓ **Question layout:** Be sure to choose “**each question is on a separate web page**”

Submissions

- ✓ **Number of submissions allowed:** Leave at default of “**Only 1 submission allowed**”
- ✓ **Late handling:** Choose whether you will accept tests after the due date.
- ✓ **Automatic submissions:** It’s a good idea to check this box. If a student took a test but somehow forgot to submit it, the test will be submitted automatically at the end date.

Feedback

- ✓ **Feedback delivery:** For strongest cheating deterrent, choose “**No Feedback will be displayed to the student.**” Or, you could choose for feedback to **display at a specific date**, using a date when all students will have completed the test. Note: If you show detailed feedback to students, the feedback will be displayed on one page that students can easily print and/or share. We do not know of a way to prevent students from printing or sharing the feedback.

Grading

- ✓ **Gradebook Options:** Choose “Grades sent to Gradebook” so the test grade can be calculated into the student’s overall grade. However, if you do not want students to see their grade immediately after submitting the test, you can make this selection later.

For more info on test settings, see pages 5-6 of the Sakai Tests & Quizzes manual:
<http://courses.durhamtech.edu/wiki/images/3/33/Tests.pdf>

Point students to online tips page

Durham Tech's Sakai "[Help for Students](#)" web site (maintained by Instructional Technologies) provides important tips to help students avoid problems with online tests. This site can be accessed from the Sakai login page.

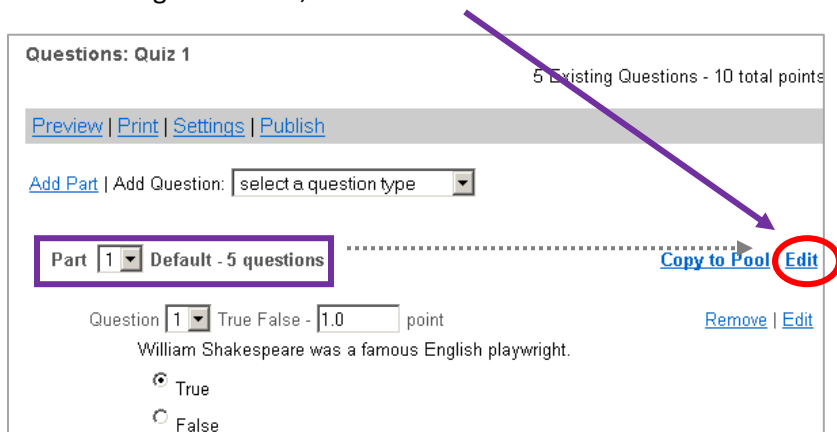
We recommend that instructors link to these tips and ask students to review them before starting a test: http://courses.durhamtech.edu/wiki/index.php/Taking_an_online_test_or_quiz_in_Sakai

Use randomization techniques

Randomizing makes cheating (specifically, sharing test information) a little more difficult for students, because it provides each student with a different version of the test. There are three ways to introduce randomization into online tests in Sakai:

1. Randomize the order in which test questions are displayed.

- In your course site, go into Tests & Quizzes. To the left of any test, click **Select** and choose **Edit**.
- At the top of the test editing screen, locate the area that denotes Part 1 of the test.
- To the right of Part 1, click on **Edit**.



- Scroll down to the "Question ordering" section near the bottom. Select **Random within Part**.
- Click **SAVE**.
- If you've created a test with multiple parts, you can repeat the steps above for each part.

2. Randomize answer items on multiple choice questions.

When creating a multiple choice question, below the boxes for the answer choices, you'll see an option to "Randomize Answers." Choose **YES**.

3. Set up the test to pull random blocks of questions from a larger pool.

- First you must have question pools in Sakai. For info on creating pools, see: <http://tinyurl.com/sakai-uf-pools> (University of Florida)
 - Note: If you have question pools in Blackboard, you can import them into Sakai.
 - You can also copy questions from any existing Sakai test into a question pool.
- Create a new test. To the right of Part 1 (or any **empty** part) click **Edit**. (see image above)
- In the "Type" section, select **Random draw from question pool**. Select the pool to draw from, enter the number of questions to draw and the point value per question.
- Click **SAVE**.