

Exams Online using Blackboard Tests: Instructions for Staff

If are considering putting your exam online in the Blackboard Test function this protocol gives you a comprehensive understanding of the steps to achieve this. This document was originally developed for the academic faculty of the SoNM Fremantle and later amended to include more context around some procedures and decision points to assist the academic faculties in tailoring this protocol to their particular needs.

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1. Tests in Blackboard

If you have never used Tests in Blackboard before, please do not worry as they are relatively easy and straightforward.

There are two ways to build a Test in Blackboard:

1. A straightforward **standard Test**: suits the scenario where you have a limited set of questions and where each students in the cohort gets exactly the same questions. The **order of answer choices in each question could be randomised** where appropriate (for example, one student's choice A becomes another student's choice C); **the order of test questions themselves could also be randomised**, but each student will get exactly the same set of questions (albeit in different order). The point value of each question in the test could be individualised, with partial credit available for getting parts of a question right if appropriate.
2. A **pool-based Test** that consists of a sequence of question groups, each group set up to randomly draw a specified number of questions out of a larger "question pool". You can have any number of questions pools set up, each typically containing questions of the same value and addressing the same topic. **This is the type of Test addressed in this protocol, as it reinforces rigour and integrity of the testing process by providing each student with a highly individualised version of the test.**
For example, if you want to examine your students' knowledge of the five subject areas covered by the course and you have a number of different types of questions for each subject area, you can create a number of pools containing different questions, each of the pools contributing a set number of questions into the Test, as follows:

Subject Area and Pool	No of questions in the pool	Question type	Question Value	No of questions out of the pool randomly assigned to the Test	Points contributed by questions from each pool to the whole Test
Area 1/Pool 1	20	Multiple choice	1 point each	5 (which means that the chances of two students being randomly assigned the same 5 questions out of the pool of 20 are very small)	+5 (e.g, 5 questions @ 1 point)
Area 1/Pool 2	4	Short answer	5 points each	1	+5
Area 2/ Pool 3	5	Matching	3 points each	1	+3
Area 2/ Pool 4	5	Ordering	2 points	1	+2
Area 2/ Pool 5	10	Multiple choice	1 point each	5	+5
Area 3/Pool 6	6	Fill in multiple blanks	3 points each	1	+3
Area 3/Pool 7	20	Multiple choice	1 point each	7	+7
Area 4/Pool 8	6	Hot spot	1 point each	4	+4
Area 4/Pool 9	4	Matching	3 points each	2	+6
Area 5/Pool 10	6	Short answer	5 points each	2	+10
TOTAL VALUE OF THE TEST					50 points

Your Test in this example will make use of 10 different pools, each of them seamlessly contributing a set number of questions into each individualised version of the test. By carefully balancing the difficulty level and value of the questions, you are also ensuring that each subject area is examined equally rigorously and balanced in regards to its representation in the Test.

Both “standard” and “pool-based” Test could be randomised. The main difference between the two is the fact that the latter allows you to achieve much greater difference between individual versions of tests that each student gets randomly assigned (naturally, the bigger the question pool the higher the level of individualisation). Introducing question pools will increase the test integrity, an important consideration given that the tests will be “take home” (which means open book). That is, the two students sitting next to each other and looking at each other screens are more likely to see completely different questions. Using pools in a way described above also ensures that each highly individualised version of test is generated using the same principles in relation to the subject areas and value of each individual question.

If you decide to go with the “standard” Test, [this Guide](#) explains how to create a test and populate it with multiple choice questions, [this Video](#) shows how to set it up with appropriate test options for your students and a number of videos that you will find on our website [here](#) (see **Tests & Quizzes** quarter) explain how to create different types of questions (including matching, ordering, fill in the blanks and hot spot) to add to your Test.

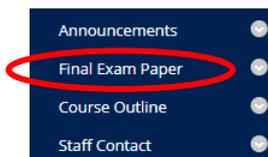
2. Checklist

Please see a breakdown at a “glance” of the stages you will go through. Use this as a checklist to ensure all steps have been considered and completed prior to your final exam.

1. Create a **new Content Area** on your Bb Course navigation panel called **Final Exam Paper**
2. Build your “**Pools**” of questions (as per the format that appears in your original Standard/Deferred papers)
3. Consider the **length of your exam** and whether appropriate to “**section**”
4. Create your “**Test Canvas**” with your pools by using **Question Sets, Random Blocks or Find Questions**
5. **Deploy** to the Final Exam Paper tab (you can consider step 7. at this point also)
6. Cross check your **GradeCentre** to ensure your newly created Final Exams column are hidden **PLUS** your final total column
7. Understand **how to set up LAP students** within the **same exam**
8. Review “**what to provide students**” in preparation for their exam online, alter to suit individual course and **post on Blackboard**

3. How to create a content area in your course

- **Create a content area** in your Bb menu (if not already there) called “Final Exam Paper” and move it up close to the top of the menu for students to see it easily.
- Click on the **top left plus button** above the navigation panel, then **content area**, name it **Final Exam Paper** and ensure you **do not click** available to students as you want to **hide** this link. If you have never worked with Blackboard Navigation Panel, these videos may be helpful
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GI-uDbOJN4g>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4is459QmOw>
- Do not put anything in this tab except for the standardised exam information for students – with your course specifics (this will be sent to you). It will look like this:



***Remember** to make this content area available once you walked through all the steps and your online exam is set up.

4. Building Pools

- To **create & build Pools** go to your control panel, **tests, surveys & pools** and click on **pools**.
- Then click on **Build Pool**. Here is where you will decide how you will categorise your pools and what “name” you will give each pool (please ignore description and instructions and leave blank).
- The easiest way at current is to categorise as per your exam with some exceptions. See example below picture & short video for more information.
- It is **most important that each “Pool” has equally weighted questions within it** as when you move them over as a Question Set or Random Block to your test canvas it will only allow the same grade to be given to each question within the set or block.
- Please move **all questions** from your **standard and deferred** (where possible) exam over to categorised pools. This will “bulk” up your pools to allow for random blocks to be created in your final test canvas.

***Important note** – if you create 1 pool of MC questions and you have 4 versions of 1 question within it (you may need to consider this when combining your standard and deferred exam into pools) note that if using the **random block** function students might get all 4 (by chance) therefore it would be better to set up **pools of “like questions/same context/same meaning”** then move these over to the final test canvas as a **random blocks**.

Want more? Watch the short video on **Creating Pools & the exceptions** created by by Michelle Katavatis (SoNM, Fremantle) below:

https://ndeduau-my.sharepoint.com/:v/g/person/michelle_katavatis_nd_edu_au/EWkkrSj2EmxDp7j8zOZx81MBjLFttdpx0BKKMD-vuWJQ_A?e=p56IGp

Ideally each **pool** will contain several more questions than will be presented to the student in the exam section. For example an **MCQ pool** with 100 questions – each student will be asked to answer 30 of these. If you are unable to create a pool with more questions, essentially you won't use the **random block function** (where it pulls a random set of questions from a large pool e.g. you want 10 MCQ questions to be randomly selected from a pool of 50 MCQ that you have available). Instead you will simply move all questions within the pool over to your final test canvas as a **question set or individual questions (under the find questions tab)**.

Question sets vs. random blocks

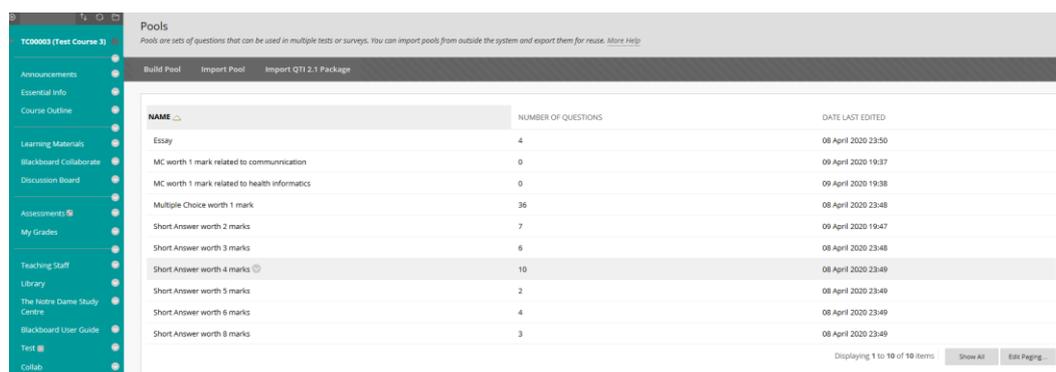
Though both question sets and random blocks deliver questions randomly to students, the two features have distinct differences:

- You can manually choose questions from all tests, surveys, and pools for question sets. Random blocks draw questions from pools only, so you can't include questions from other tests or surveys.
- You can search questions and browse metadata to create question sets. You can't search questions or browse metadata when you create random blocks.
- You can delete questions in a question set. The question is removed from the set, but not deleted from your course. You can't delete questions within a random block. If you don't want a question included in your random block, remove it from the pool.
- After you make your selections, you set the same points possible for all questions in the set or block. To assign a different point value to a question, you need to add the question individually outside of a block or set.

Source (also see for mor information):

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Tests_Pools_Surveys/Reuse_Questions/Random_Block

Example of Pools created in different ways



NAME	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	DATE LAST EDITED
Essay	4	08 April 2020 23:50
MC worth 1 mark related to communication	0	09 April 2020 19:37
MC worth 1 mark related to health informatics	0	09 April 2020 19:38
Multiple Choice worth 1 mark	36	08 April 2020 23:48
Short Answer worth 2 marks	7	09 April 2020 19:47
Short Answer worth 3 marks	6	08 April 2020 23:48
Short Answer worth 4 marks	10	08 April 2020 23:49
Short Answer worth 5 marks	2	08 April 2020 23:49
Short Answer worth 6 marks	4	08 April 2020 23:49
Short Answer worth 8 marks	3	08 April 2020 23:49

Displaying 1 to 10 of 10 items Show All Edit Page

For more information on **Blackboard Tests** please see the University LTO resources under “Tests & Quizzes” found here:

<https://www.notredame.edu.au/staff/work/LTO/online-learning/resources/assessment>

For more information on **creating pools** please see the Blackboard Help resources found here:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Tests_Pools_Surveys

For more information on **types of questions** please see the Blackboard Help resources found here:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Tests_Pools_Surveys/Question_Types

***TIP** – when creating MCQs, use the **randomise answers function** where possible (not suited for questions with all of the above or none of the above as this answer could appear in any position in the answer when displayed to students). Even if students are allocated the same question from the question pool, the order of answers will be different for each of them, therefore improving the integrity of the exam.

5. The Length of your Exam and Sectioning

Now is a good time to consider whether “sectioning” would be appropriate for your exam. This might be particularly useful for longer exams whereby you would prefer they don’t “sit” in the one exam link. You could consider the following:

- Breaking the exam into stages (e.g. setting up three separate tests, each one up 1 hour long if the duration was 3 hours)
- If the order of stages is important, you could either regulate it by date/time (e.g. as the time progresses, new stages become visible) or using adaptive release – e.g. the student must attempt the previous stage to release the next one.
- Where a combination for Blackboard Tests and Turnitin might be appropriate (e.g. section 1 multiple choice in Bb Test, section 2 matching in Bb Test and section 3 essay in Turnitin)

For more information on **adaptive release** please see the Blackboard Help resources found here:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Course_Content/Release_Content

6. Creating your Test Canvas

Now that your pools are created you are required to “move” them over to the test canvas. Remember if you choose to section your exam you would essentially need to complete this step for each “section” (e.g. MC, Short Answer, Essay – 3 sections – 3 test canvas’s). This will be essentially what will be deployed to students.

- To **build your Test & Test Canvas** go to your control panel, **tests, surveys & pools** and click on **tests**.
- Then **Build Test. Type** in the test name – for example NURS1013 Final Exam (please ignore description and instructions and leave blank. This information will be provided in a generic adaptable item in each Final Exam Paper tab). Once submitted you will be taken to the Test Canvas – this is where we begin using your pools.

When in the **Test Canvas** move pools over in the following ways:

- Click the “Reuse Question” tab and select “Create Random Block”
- Click the “Reuse Question” tab and select “ Create Question Set”
- Click the “Reuse Question” tab and select “Find Questions”

Want more? Watch the video below on creating your Test Canvas using Pools created by Michelle

Katavais:

https://ndeduau-my.sharepoint.com/:v/g/personal/michelle_katavatis_nd_edu_au/ERgXHSjM3oFliJoWPIQlxT4B-xQyHbN7dt2liAOmkmH_zQ?e=Y3cGd3

For more information of each of these options please see the Blackboard Help resources found here: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Tests_Pools_Surveys/Orig_Reuse_Questions

***Important note** – when setting up your **random blocks** or **question sets** ensure you reconfigure and allocate the marks per question. It will always default to 10 marks per question. See below:



Buttons: Delete and Remark, Points, Update and Remark, Hide Question Details

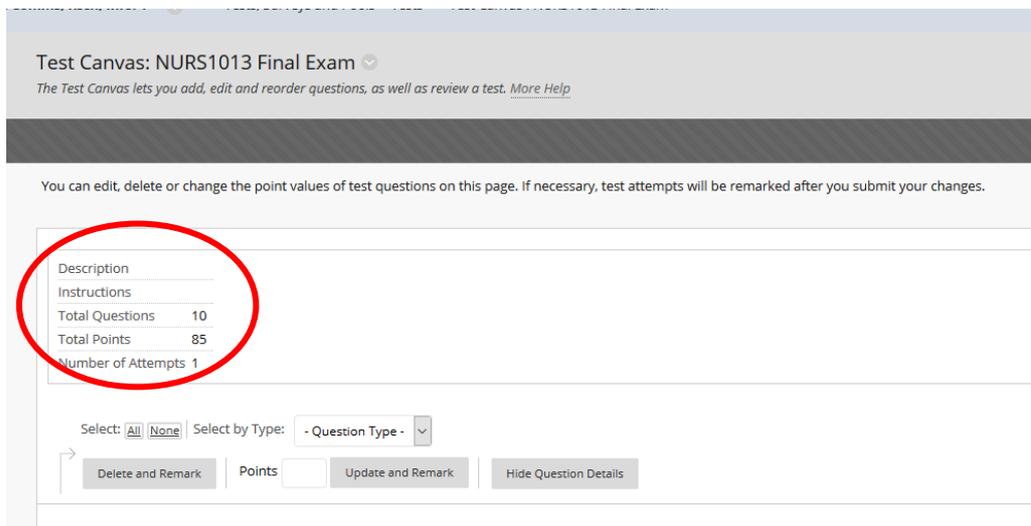
1 - 3. Random Block

Points per question: 10
Total Points: 30

Total Questions: 36
Number of Questions to display: 3
Source Pool: Multiple Choice worth 1 mark
Question Types: All Pool Questions

Preview questions that match selected criteria

***TIP** – To make sure you are on track when building your test canvas keep checking the total points and total questions and ensure these align with your approved exam. See below:



Test Canvas: NURS1013 Final Exam

The Test Canvas lets you add, edit and reorder questions, as well as review a test. [More Help](#)

You can edit, delete or change the point values of test questions on this page. If necessary, test attempts will be remarked after you submit your changes.

Description

Instructions

Total Questions 10
Total Points 85
Number of Attempts 1

Select: All None | Select by Type: - Question Type -

Buttons: Delete and Remark, Points, Update and Remark, Hide Question Details

***TIP** - when using a question set OR random block, questions within this are automatically randomised.

7. Deploying your Final Exam within Blackboard (Setting Up Test Options)

Since creating your **pools** and building them in the **test canvas** your Final Exam is ready to deploy. Remember if you choose to section your exam you would essentially need to complete this step for each “section” you are to deploy (e.g. MC, Short Answer, Essay – 3 sections – 3 deployments).

To deploy:

1. Click on your newly created “**Final Exam Paper**” tab on the navigation panel
2. Click on the **Assessments** drop down and then **Test**
3. You should now see your test within the “**Add Existing Test**” – click on the correct one and press **submit**
4. You now have the chance to adapt **the test options**. Depending on your context and needs you may use a combination of different options, but please remember to maintain consistency across all your examinations as it will be helpful to your students:
 - Course link description: **leave blank**

- Open in a new window: **selecting No** means that once the student started the exam, there is no easy way to go back to Blackboard content areas to consult materials. If you would like the exam to open in a separate tab, select **Yes**
- Make available to students: **yes** (this is not immediate as you will set time restrictions a bit further down)
- New Announcements – **no**
- Multiple attempts – **no**
- Force completion – **no** if you would like students to be able to re-enter the exam if they are locked out. The test will pick up from where the student left off **but it is important to note that** the timer will still continue during this “away from exam” time and auto-submit when the time is up from when the student initially opened the exam (the student will be notified when they log back into Blackboard). This option ensures that in the event that the student is dropped out of the Test (for example, if their internet connection momentarily dropped), they can rejoin where they left out without any intervention/help from the staff members. On the other hand, the timer continues and the student may request for the lost time to be granted back. Please discuss this eventuality beforehand to decide on the appropriate protocol to use in this situation. If you select **Yes**, it means that the student must finish the exam in one sitting. In this case, if they dropped out of the test they cannot re-enter and must rely on staff member to decide on the course of action depending on how much time they already spend doing the test.
- Set timer & auto submit – **yes for both. Yes for Auto-submit ensures that the test automatically shuts down once the time is finished. If auto-submit is on No, the students can take as long as they need to finish the test, but the test will be shown in red with the exact time it took them to complete recorded.** Please see the Q&A note on timer and auto-submission below for further details.
- Display After/Before – **set to your exam.** You can allow an extra 10 minutes on the end “just in case” as this will have no impact to students as they will still have to complete within the set timer allocation
- Password – **no**
- Add user or group – **yes** if you have any students on a LAP (instructions on setting up your LAP student exams are below)
- Due date – **no** please leave blank
- Self-Assessment options – ensure the first tick box is checked only (**include in GC score calculations**)
- Show Test Results – please clear everything if this is an exam with no feedback (see below). You may reveal the marks to students on a set date if you wish.

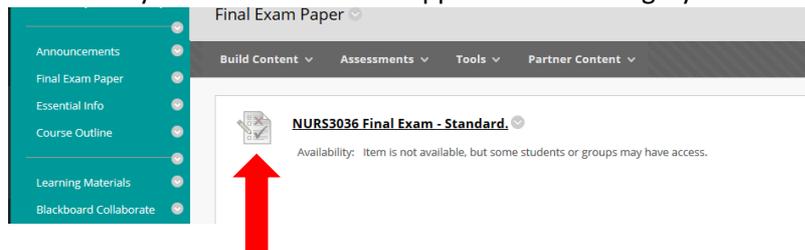
SHOW TEST RESULTS AND FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS

Test results and feedback are available to students after they complete a test. Set up to two rules to show results and feedback. Rules occur based on the events selected. Each rule specifies when and what to show students; such as scores, answers, and feedback for each question.

WHEN [ⓘ]	SCORE PER QUESTION [ⓘ]	ANSWERS [ⓘ]	FEEDBACK [ⓘ]	SHOW INCORRECT QUESTIONS [ⓘ]
---Choose---	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> All Answers <input type="checkbox"/> Correct <input type="checkbox"/> Submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
---Choose---	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> All Answers <input type="checkbox"/> Correct <input type="checkbox"/> Submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Test Presentation
 - ✓ One at a time means that only one question will appear on screen, which arguably makes it harder, but may also serve to focus the student on the question. Selecting for all test questions to appear on the screen all at once may not be a prudent choice for take home exam, as it could tempt the students to cheat, such as copying everything and emailing to a third party for help.
 - ✓ Prohibit backtracking, once again, makes exam harder. The students must decide on the spot as they will not be able to go back to review or change the answer.
- RANDOMISE QUESTIONS CHOICE – Selecting randomisation means that all questions included in the test will appear at random order, disregarding their subject areas and value, with the

risk of confusing already stressed students. A better option may be to randomise in a different way, such as randomising the order of answers to the question instead. Click SUBMIT – your exam link should appear and show a greyed out icon (see below)



Want to see the *student view of your exam* with some of the above options? Watch the short video below created by Michelle Katavatis:

https://ndeduau-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/michelle_katavatis_nd_edu_au/Ea0ESZYaTt9Jmo6pz8J-a_cBolkzC-grHkKC2lzN0FD8mA?e=NcF7up

Final Submission of Exam – Q&A: *With the ‘auto submit’ function enabled and the timer set, once this time expires will the exam be saved at this point? Will the students no longer be able to continue and the exam page closed down?*

Yes that is correct. Once the time of 180 minutes for example is up, the exam will close and auto submit if the student has not finished before this point. If they exit within the 180mins and want to come back in (not having clicked submit yet) they can....but the timer will continue to “tick” from the original start time. The exam page will close down at a few points:

1. The time restriction – we have set (when the exam is available)
2. Once the student has finished and submitted (even if there is time left...they have physically submitted at the end and have a receipt. There is no opportunity to go back)
3. If the student is still in the exam but the “official” time is up in accordance to your set time – it will auto submit.

*** Note** – *if the student does attempt re-entering the exam after submitting their attempt a notice will come up on blackboard informing them that they have completed the test and no further attempts are allowed*

8. Hiding your Grade Centre Columns

When the exam is created in Blackboard Tests it automatically creates a **new GC column**. This column **WILL NOT be hidden to students** in the first instance. Please complete the following before your exam:

- ✓ Click on your **Grade centre** via the **control panel** then full grade centre
- ✓ **Find** the newly created exam column
- ✓ Drop down on the **small grey arrow** to the right
- ✓ Click **hide from students (on/off)**. You should now see a **red line through a circle** indication it is now hidden



You will also need to **HIDE your total column** as the final grade of the exam will calculate here. Although when using the same process above you will find there will be no option to hide from students. Please:

- ✓ Click on **Edit Column Information**
- ✓ Scroll down to **options**
- ✓ Select **“NO”** for show this column to students

***Important note** – it could be likely that previous total columns may have come over after course copying from previous sites. If this is the case and you see duplicate Total Columns please delete those not in use.

9. How to set up LAP student exams (without creating another duplicate test)

To achieve this you will need a list of your students with LAP plans and their altered time allocations (is it 15 minutes more? 20 minutes more? Etc.). You will be adding them as “exceptions” to the standard exam and setting “rules” for them individually (by adding the addition time on in minutes to the standard).

The steps below are also illustrated in [this Guide](#) and [this Video](#).

1. Click on your **Final Exam Paper** tab
2. Find the exam (that is greyed out) and click on the **drop down arrow** to the right
3. Click **Edit the Test Options**
4. Scroll down to **Test Availability Exceptions**
5. Click **Add User or Group**
6. **Individually select** each LAP plan student
7. **Ensure** attempts are single, timer & auto-submit is ticked and has the additional time allocated (e.g.: 20mins) to the total time in minutes (e.g. if you exam was 180 minutes and the student had an extra 20min you would put 200 in the box) and the availability is at the exact time the test is running (you do not need to add the time on here but can “just in case” as this will have no impact to students as they will still have to complete within the set timer allocation). See below

TEST AVAILABILITY EXCEPTIONS

Click **Add User or Group** to search for course users and groups to add to the exception list. Timer and force completion must be enabled in the previous test availability step to enable those settings for exceptions. If you choose to use groups, you must make the group unavailable if you do not want students to see group members. Click **Remove all Exceptions** to delete all exceptions for the test.

Add User or Group Remove All Exceptions

NAME	ATTEMPTS	TIMER	AVAILABILITY
 NURS TestUser1	Single Attempt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 200 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Auto-Submit	 After: 13/04/2020 16:55 Until: 13/04/2020 17:30

8. Click **SUBMIT**

***To note** – This step of adding LAP students can be done when deploying the exam and setting the test options in Step 7 above.

10. What to provide your students on in preparation for their online exam

Please see the document entitled **Exams using Bb Tests GENERAL Instructions for STUDENTS**, which is the SoNM (Fremantle) example of a general information sheet to be provided to students in the lead up to exams. The document is **non-specific** and tells students what they might expect and that further details will be provided. Closer to your exam date, you will need to issue your students with more SPECIFIC instructions about exam details (please see **Exams using Bb Tests SPECIFIC Instructions for STUDENTS**). This can be posted within the “Final Exam Paper” tab as an item and/or as an announcement (with a tick to also email).

IMPORTANT! In addition to the information sheet, **if your students have never taken Blackboard tests before**, please offer them a short Mock Test, just so that they have a chance to trial the technology. It may only contain a few questions (which do not have to be related to your course), but make sure that it is timed (e.g., 2 minutes), auto-submitted and allows multiple attempts.