



Tests and Exams in Avenue to Learn

Introduction

Avenue to Learn, a branded version of D2L Brightspace, is McMaster University's Learning Management System (LMS). Whether teaching face-to-face or remotely, Avenue provides a reliable, secure space for administering online tests and exams. This guide offers information about Avenue test and exam features, best practices, and provides additional resources.

New to Avenue? Start with [Avenue Fundamentals](#)



Pedagogical Considerations for Online Tests and Exams

Embedding Accessibility and Providing Accommodations

Conducting tests or exams online allows many options for access, some of which may require different methods of implementation than in a face-to-face course. We encourage you to design tests and exams according to principles of **universal design**, such as holding asynchronous tests or exams, extending the amount of time all students have to complete the assessment, offering practice tests or exams, or creating or encouraging alternative formats. This can make completing the assessment easier for students with disabilities, students with care-giving obligations, students in different time zones, and students who may not have consistent access to a computer or internet service.

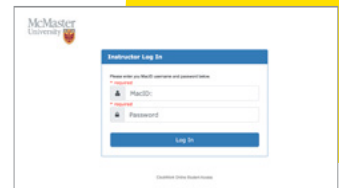
Holding tests or exams online may mean rethinking how to best provide necessary student accommodations, as some students may need different resources and supports than they would in a face-to-face class. While implementing universal design strategies in your course may reduce the number of accommodation requests you receive, it is important that you stay up to date on what accommodations individual students require by logging into the **[Student Accessibility Services portal](#)**.

Promoting Academic Integrity

You can use several strategies to promote academic integrity during your exam, including clearly indicating whether the exam is open-book, and indicating whether collaboration is allowed. It is also suggested that instructors include information about academic integrity in the preamble to the assessment, including language taken from the **[Undergraduate Course Management Policy \(page 10, items 1-3\)](#)**. You may also consider including a separate (ungraded) question that asks students to confirm they have read and understood the definition of academic integrity and the consequences of academic misconduct. McMaster University's Office of Academic Integrity has recommended the following language:

*By submitting this work, I certify that the work represents solely my own independent efforts. I confirm that I am expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. I confirm that it is my responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty under the **[Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy-1-1.pdf)**, <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy-1-1.pdf>*

The Student Accessibility Services Portal



Log in using your MacID & Password



Follow the prompts to access accommodation requests



A guide on the value of open-book and collaborative testing to reduce academic integrity.

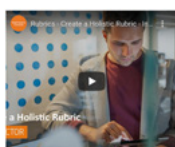
Using Rubrics

Before creating your assignment, it may be helpful to **create a rubric**. Having a rubric can map student performance onto key learning outcomes and can serve as an important framework when providing feedback.

Here are some videos on how to build a rubric directly into Avenue.



Video: Creating Analytic (Multi Level) Rubrics



Video: Creating Holistic Rubrics



Video: Add a Rubric to a Discussion Topic

Choosing Assessment Tools in Avenue

For tests or exams that can be completed outside of Avenue (e.g., a take-home exam in a Word document), consider setting up an Assignment Folder that students can use to submit their work.

To read more about how to configure an Assignments folder, including how to enable the Turn It In similarity checker, see the **Assignment Tools** resource or the **Assignment wiki** (also includes a video on grading and providing feedback on assignments directly in Avenue). If using TurnItIn, review this **California State University resource** on how to provide in-text comments and **some tips** on how to make the most out of the feedback tool.

For tests or exams that involve multiple choice questions, short answers, timed portions, or other components that require students to perform tasks within a limited period, consider using **Avenue Quizzes**. What follows is a condensed overview of commonly used features.

Creating Quiz Questions

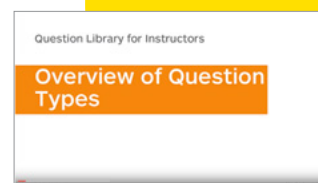
Creating a Question Library

The Question Library serves as a repository for all the potential questions that can be asked in a Quiz, Survey or Self-Assessment. Only people enrolled as Instructors, TA 1 and TA 3 have access to view the editor version of assessments in Avenue. We recommend that you create your questions in the Question Library and then import them into your Quiz. This way, questions will be saved in your Question Library and can be used in randomized sections and multiple quizzes.

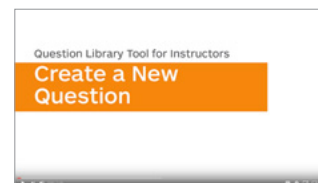
Suggested best practices for designing effective rubrics



Using Avenue tutorial videos



Video: overview of question types (e.g., multiple choice, true or false, fill in the blanks, ordering, matching, etc.)



Video: How to create questions in the Question Library

Randomizing Questions

Once your Question Library is populated, you can distribute a unique set of questions to individual learners by following these steps:

- In Avenue, select Assessments > Quizzes> New Quiz.
- Create a name for the quiz (e.g., “Final Exam”),
- Click Add/Edit Questions > New > Question Pool.
- You will be prompted to enter a Question Pool Title,
- Set the number of questions to select for the assessment, and determine the points per question.
- Click Browse Question Library to select the questions you would like to form the question pool.

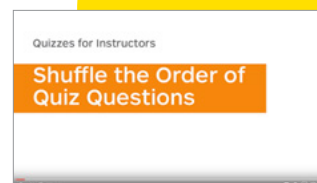
Creating Timed Assessments

Avenue enables instructors to set a wide window within which all students can complete the assessment while still limiting the amount of time individual students take to submit their answers. You can create these parameters following these instructions:

- In Avenue, in the Quiz section select Restrictions > Timing.
- Choose “Enforced Time Limit” and check the box labeled “prevent the student from making further changes.”
- Avenue will require you to set a “Grace Period,” which sets a finite amount of time before students are prevented from making further changes.
- The amount of time set (e.g., 1 minute, 5 minutes) is up to you.

For resources on using the Quiz tool, visit [best practices for the Quiz tool](#).

Using Avenue
tutorial video



Video: How to randomize/shuffle quiz questions

Administering Online Tests and Exams

Establishing an Error-Reporting Process

While McMaster has confirmed with Brightspace D2L that Avenue can handle significant demand and does not expect interruptions, there may be technology-related concerns on the student's end that you cannot control (see below for computer hygiene tips). Consider establishing and communicating an error-reporting process. You might ask students to email you a screenshot of the problem, if they experience technical difficulties. You might also consider ensuring that you and/or a TA are online and available by email if the assessment is timed.

Encouraging Computer Hygiene

Well before the test or exam begins, we suggest sharing with students important information computer hygiene tips that will reduce the risk of technical difficulty:

- Turn off all unnecessary programs, especially anything that might be downloading or streaming;
- Coordinate household internet and technology use so that you are not competing with for bandwidth or devices;
- If possible, connect to the internet via a wired connection;
- Move close to the WiFi hub;
- Restart your computer one to two hours before the exam.

Preview the Test or Exam

Once the test or exam is prepared, consider reviewing it to make sure that it works. Instructors (and TAs with access to assessments) can follow these instructions to do so:

- Start by selecting Assessments > Quizzes > [Assignment].
- Click on the arrow beside it and hit preview.
- You should then be able to take the quiz as a student does.
- To review availability and view settings, select "View as Student" by clicking on your name at the top right of your screen.
- When you are done, click on your profile picture and select "x" to revert to your instructor view.

We suggest that instructors distribute to students a mock test or exam that uses each of the question formats that will be used in the official assessment. Doing this well in advance will enable students to identify any problems with the quiz function.

Editing a Question while a Quiz is Active

It is possible to edit a question after a quiz is made available and after some learners have submitted quiz attempts. To edit the quiz question follow these instructions:

- Click the arrow next to the quiz title (the 'context menu') and select edit.
- Click Add/Edit Questions, the context menu for the question you wish to edit, and choose Edit.

To learn more visit [Regrading a Quiz](#) on the Avenue wiki.

Granting Special Access to Provide Accommodations

To make accommodations for individual students, such as changing the test duration or release date, follow these instructions:

- Access the restrictions tab within your Avenue quiz.
- At the bottom, select "Allow selected users with special access to this quiz."
- All release times are set using Eastern Standard Time.

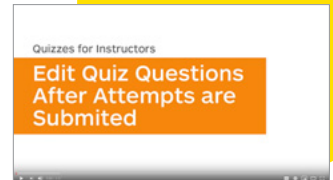
These steps also apply to take-home assignments.

Grading Tests and Exams in Avenue

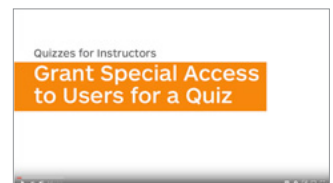
Setting Up Grade Book and Marking

For step by step instructions on how to set up your grade book, please see the [Avenue wiki on grades](#). Avenue can automatically grade questions with set responses, such as multiple choice, true and false, or matching. If preferred, you can also [manually grade quiz responses](#). This is important information to know in cases where, for example, correct spelling is required in a fill in the blank question.

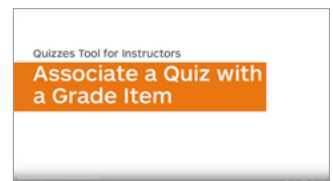
Using Avenue tutorial videos



Video: How to update grades for students who have already completed the quiz



Video: Granting Special Access for a quiz



Video: connect quiz scores to your grade book automatically

Restricting Grades from View

You may consider “hiding” the grades for a quiz or exam until you are prepared to release them.

- Under Assessments > Grades, you will see your quiz or exam accompanied by a small downwards arrow to the right.
- Click the arrow, then select Edit > Restrictions > Hide from Users.

When you are ready to make the grades available for students, you can simply un-check this box.

Re-weighting and Downloading Grades

Instructors cannot re-weight grades for individual students in Avenue. We recommend re-weighting individual grades in Excel and indicating to students that Avenue will not display correct grades in those cases. However, an exemption of a grade (i.e., treating the grade as though it does not exist) is possible.

You can download grades from Avenue by:

- Clicking Grades > Export, selecting the assessments, and exporting as an Excel document.

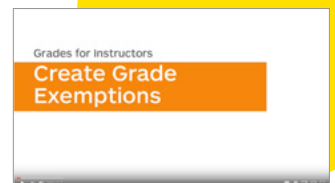
You can also use the statistics function to see average scores for students by auto-graded question (and export grades before marking/releasing to the grade book).

- Choose Manage Quizzes > Actions for X (drop-down beside quiz) > Statistics > User or Question Stats + Export.

Additional Resources

If you experience technical challenges with Avenue, you can submit a support request by visiting the [Avenue Support web page](#). If you have pedagogical questions about Avenue features or require other support, please submit a request at the [MacPherson Institute support page](#).

Using Avenue
tutorial videos



Video: how to create grade exemptions