

The problem

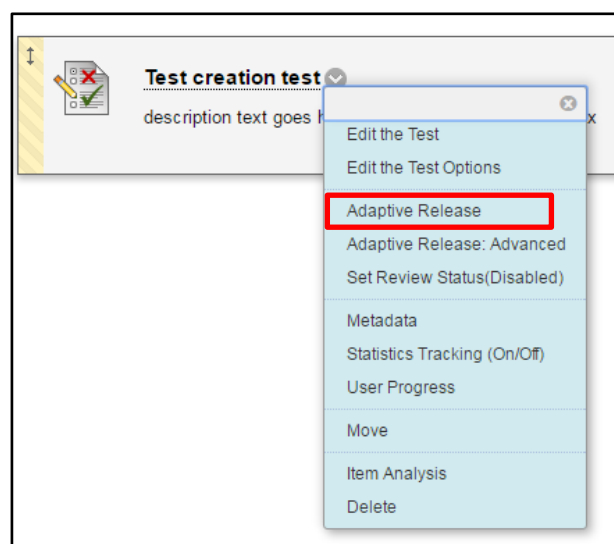
I've been reusing questions in my tests every year, but now I'm worried that my old students will share those questions with my new students. What should I do?

The quick and dirty solution

To minimise the risk of students from previous years showing current students the questions in a test, you can set availability dates on the test to hide them from view automatically once they are no longer needed. To do this, hover your mouse over the chevron by the test's name and choose *Adaptive Release* from the menu that appears.

The first set of options on the Adaptive Release page are for dates. You can use the Display Until date and time to prevent students accessing the test once it is no longer needed.

Please note that although it is also possible to set access dates in the Test Option settings, Adaptive Release settings will overrule these if test exceptions are also used. For more information, please see the Knowledge Base article [Known issues with Blackboard 9 assessments](#).



Although this option will successfully prevent students accessing assessments after they have closed, it will not prevent them making notes, taking screen-shots etc. while they have access. They will also lose any educational benefit from being able to review their old tests, re-take formative quizzes etc.

The harder but better method

If your main concern regarding assessments is that students may share questions between years, the best way to solve this problem is to vary the questions for each year. Although rewriting questions may not be a simple or quick way to solve the problem, it does remove the issue whilst still allowing past students access to their assessments. This task can be made less onerous by using question pools in Blackboard. You could use a single pool in a course unit to store all the questions you use together, or you can set up multiple pools to store questions by subject, tutor, concept, and so on. As the number of pooled questions increases so does the number of possible tests that can be built, reducing the need to devise new questions each year.

Using pools can also save you time in the long run as they allow you to build tests by simply selecting questions from the pools rather than writing them from scratch. It is also possible to set up tests that take questions randomly from the pool, minimising the risks of students sharing answers as the nature and order of the questions will vary from student to student. If you use more than one pool, you can even create a test that takes a specific number of questions at random from each of them, giving you fine control over the learning goals of the test whilst still reducing the risk of collusion amongst students in the same or different years.

How to build a pool

To set up a question pool, open the Course Tools section of the Control Panel in a course unit's left hand menu and click on *Tests, Surveys and Pools*. On the page that appears select *Pools*, then *Build Pool* on the next page. A form will load asking for some information. Although only the *Name* field is mandatory, you may find it useful to

add a description and possibly some instructions as well, especially if other instructors also create questions for the unit. When you are ready, click the blue **Submit** button.

Adding your old questions to a new pool

You will not need to re-write your old questions to add them to a new pool. Once you have created the pool, you should see a page called the Pool Canvas. Just underneath the pool's name are three options. Clicking *Find Questions* opens a pop-up window (shown here) that allows you to search for questions to add to the pool by the test they are in, by question type, by keyword, etc. Select the questions you want to add to the pool by clicking the box next to the question text, and when you are finished click the blue **Submit** button.

Find Questions

Questions are organised by the **Criteria** listed on the page. Use the **Criteria** drop-down lists to search for questions to add to the test. Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to return to the previous page. [More Help](#)

Search current results:

Criteria Summary

Tests: **All Tests**

Displaying 1 to 2 of 2 items

Browsing Criteria

View

Pools

Tests

- ☒ All Tests
- ☐ Adaptive release test
- ☐ Pool test
- ☐ Test creation test
- ☐ Test Test 1
- ☐ Week 1 test

Question types

Categories

Topics

Levels of Difficulty

Keywords

Question Text	Question Type	Points	Source Name	Source Type
☒ Test 2. The colours of the French flag are [red] [white] [blue]	Fill in Multiple Blanks	10	Week 1 test	Test
☐ True or false?: The word True sounds like grue	True / False	10	Test Test 1	Test

Displaying 1 to 2 of 2 items

Selected Questions: 1

A video walk-through of how to set up a pool and add existing questions can be found on Blackboard's help page [Question Pools](#).

Adding new questions to a pool

To create new questions within a pool, click on *Create Question* in the Pool Canvas and choose a question type from the drop-down list. This will allow you to write a question in the same way as when writing them for a test.

Adding pool questions to a test

Once your question pools have been set up, you can use them to create tests quickly. Once you have created a new test (or started to edit an existing test) you will see the *Test Canvas* page. Under the name of the test, you will see options to *Create Question*, *Reuse Question*, or *Upload Question*. To add questions from your pool, click *Reuse Question* and select one of the options available. *Find Questions* is the simplest method, as this allows you to choose which questions you want. *Create Random Block* and *Create Question Set* are somewhat more complex, but they allow you to set up more sophisticated tests that vary for each student.

More information on adding pool questions to tests can be found on Blackboard's help pages [Reuse Questions](#), [Random Blocks](#) and [Question Sets](#).

Any questions?

You can find more information on Blackboard tests on the Knowledge Base. The main article on the subject is [Using Blackboard tests \(quizzes\) for assessment](#), and the other articles are linked to from there. These include information on inserting images into question text and an up-to-date list of known issues related to Blackboard tests.

Blackboard's own help pages also contain a great deal of information in their section on [Tests, Surveys and Pools](#).

You can also contact your eLearning team for assistance by email at elearning@manchester.ac.uk, or through the [Support Centre](#) where you can request a service or report a fault and direct it to eLearning.