Availability Dates

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# Introduction

Hello; my name is Megan Jones and I am an Instructional Designer here at EKU. Today, as part of our faculty professional development, we are going to cover **Availability Dates**. As you know, Blackboard has particular quirks and alternative ways of performing tasks, so hopefully you will find this short tutorial helpful.

# What are Availability Dates?

Availability dates are a **way of guiding students through materials on Blackboard** by directly **changing when content items appear**. There are several ways to control how your content appears in Blackboard using adaptive release, but that is beyond the scope of this tutorial. Those ways are:

1. **Time Release**: Controlling when content items appear by using availability dates;
2. **Membership Release**: Certain groups of students can access controlled materials;
3. **Grade/Completion Release**: Students can access items only if they achieve a certain score or complete a prior assignment or quiz.

# How Do Availability Dates Work?

Availability dates work by using specific time and date settings to **control how students view materials** in a course. An example of this would be allowing a **quiz** to release on a specific date and time.

# When to Use Availability Dates

Availability dates can be used in several teaching scenarios. Professors usually have their own **style** or **method of running courses**, but I will share my own experiences. When I was a faculty member, I used availability dates in **a couple of scenarios**:

* **Pacing Students through Modules**: Sometimes you want the student to follow you through the course and not work ahead.
* **Allowing Students to Work Ahead**: If students complete certain assignments and quizzes, they can move on to the next module or assignment.

As stated previously, faculty can **implement availability dates** on items of their choosing – some ways help meet policy requirements, some methods help with convenience, and other releases control student behavior within a course.

# Implementing Availability Dates in Blackboard

The premise is simple – we want to control students’ access to materials. We will cover how to change availability dates for items in this tutorial.

## Availability Dates

Let’s take a look at a basic quiz in Blackboard (F1):



*Figure 1: Blackboard Quiz*

In order to control when the quiz is released, be sure to look at the **Edit the Test Options** selection after clicking the down arrow by the title of the quiz (F2). **Make sure that Edit Mode is on when you are making changes to your course (F3), otherwise you may not be able to access the Edit the Test Options page.**



*Figure 2: Accessing the Edit the Test Options menu item*



*Figure 3: Edit Mode*

Once you are in the Edit the Test Options page, you should see the **title and description of the quiz** (F4):



*Figure 4: Edit the Test Options page*

Scroll down to the **Test Availability** section (F5), and you should see **various options that control access to your quiz**, including making the quiz available to students, adding a new announcement to tell students about the test, controlling the number of attempts, and timers/force completion.



*Figure 5: Test Availability Section*

After viewing these options, you should see a **“Display After”** and **“Display Until”** area (F6). This is where you will **set your test availability dates**. Students will **not be able to access** an assessment **outside of the times you specify** in your quiz. After changing the dates, you can save your changes by clicking Submit.



*Figure 6: Test Availability Option*



*Figure 7: Check the Test Availability Dates*

**Did You Know?**

You can set **availability dates** on **any item in Blackboard**; it **does not** have to be a quiz or assignment.



# Conclusion

Hopefully, as a result of this handout, you have become familiar with the basics of availability dates. If you need help or support, **please do not hesitate to contact me**. I can be reached at megan.jones@eku.edu and (859) 622-3422. Thank you!