

2025-26

Canvas Based Digital Exams: Technical Guide for Students



LockDown Browser

Invigilated, In-Person Examinations taking place in allocated PC Labs on-campus using LockDown Browser.

Purpose of this Guide

This Guide provides practical information about how to access and complete your **Canvas Digital Exam**.

These exams will be **invigilated** and will take place **in-person** within an **approved computer lab**. You will be given your lab allocation in advance of the exam. It is important that you attend the lab you have been allocated to.

These exams will typically be **closed-book** and will use a locked down browser. The **LockDown Browser** prevents access to anything other than the exam and helps to protect academic integrity. Some exams may provide you with links to allowable resources that can be accessed within lockdown browser during the examination.

These exams will be timed and take the format of a **Quiz** within Canvas. They may contain many short questions (e.g. multiple choice, multiple answer, short answer style questions) or longer questions (e.g. essay style).

This Technical Guide will be available on the Examinations website
<https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/manage-your-studies/examinations-and-assessment>

This page contains guides for all students across all campuses and modes of study. Do check the website in case there is a specific guide for your set of assessments.

This **Canvas Digital Exams: Technical Guide** provides information on:

1. Important information about your Canvas Digital Exam
2. Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)
3. How to access and complete your Canvas Digital Exam
4. Top tips
5. Appendix 1: Information for Stack/CodeRunner Exams
6. Appendix 2: Changing Default Canvas Timezones

Important! Please read these points carefully

1. **PLEASE TAKE ACTION NOW!** – Log into Canvas as soon as possible to check that you can access the course and can see the **Canvas Digital Exam Module**. If you cannot access Canvas, please contact us right away so we can resolve any issue before the day of the examination.
2. **Exam Timetable** – Please check the [Exam Timetable](#) carefully for the date/time/location of your exam. If the exam is held in multiple rooms (or if you have exam adjustments) please check the [Portal](#) for your room allocations.
3. **Computer Labs** – You will only be able to access the exam within the computer lab on campus you have been allocated to. If you have never been to the lab, it would be advisable to visit the lab in advance so you can easily find it on the day of the exam and to ensure you can log in using your university credentials (or the credentials your institution has provided you if studying at a partner institution).
4. **Stack/CodeRunner Exams** – If your exam is using Stack and/or CodeRunner question types, please see Appendix 1 at the end of this document.
5. **Exam times** – Your Canvas Digital Exam will begin at the start time and date specified on the [Exam Timetable](#). **Please note Canvas operates in UK time** and that the time zone on Canvas will be defaulted to UK time, **unless** you have updated your local time zone setting (see Appendix 2). Please note, you **will not** be admitted to the exam if you arrive more than 30 minutes after the start time.
6. **Duration** – The standard duration of a Canvas Digital Exam is **2 hours (though please check the [Exam Timetable](#) for the exact duration**. However, if you start the exam late (no later than 30 minutes) the time will be reduced accordingly. If you have reasonable adjustments, please see note 8 below.
7. **Mistakes on exam** – If you identify what you consider to be a mistake on your Canvas Digital Exam, please inform the invigilator. Any mistakes will be investigated and taken into consideration during the moderation process. You should then continue with the exam as best you can.
8. **Late Submission of Exam** – No late submissions will be accepted. Once the time for the exam expires your exam will be auto-submitted. Students who are unable to complete their examinations, and who have mitigating circumstances (MC), must follow the MC process as outlined in the updated [Student General Information Guide](#).
9. **Reasonable adjustments** – As part of reasonable adjustments measures, you may have been given additional time to complete your exam. This will be displayed on the exam introduction page. If you start the exam and realise that this additional time has not been included, notify the invigilator as soon as possible.
10. **Contact us** – If you have any problems accessing the PCs, Canvas or the Exam Area of your course prior to the examination, e-mail ISHelp@hw.ac.uk stating the course code, your campus and include any relevant screenshots.

Multi-Factor Authentication

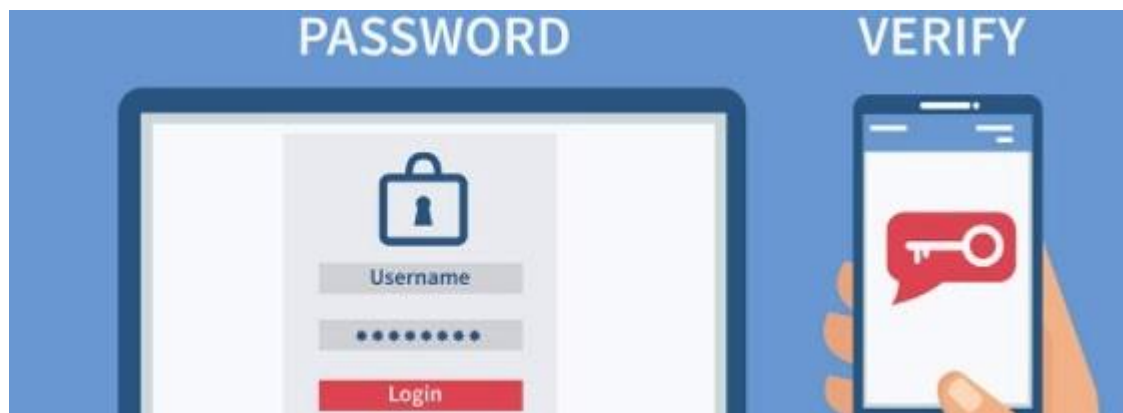
Students **may** need to use Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) with their Heriot-Watt user account to access Canvas.

MFA is a secure additional login process and is one of the most effective ways to keep you and your work safe online.

Please ensure that you have your mobile device fully charged and accessible at the start of your Canvas Digital Exam to avoid any potential issues during the login process.

We would recommend using the Authenticator app and connect your phone to the Wi-Fi to ensure you receive the approval notification.

Once you have logged into Canvas you should switch off your phone and put it away during the examination.



If you have not already done so please prepare your account well in advance of any exams and avoid any potential issues by using [our guidance information](#).

If you have any questions or require further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact Information Services at ISHelp@hw.ac.uk.

Top Tips

1. Ensure you know which computer lab you have been allocated to and which Canvas course the exam will take place on. You will **not** be able to take this exam from home, or from any other location.
2. Ensure that you have read these exam instructions.

How to Access Your Canvas Digital Exam

The exam will take place **on-campus**, in an **approved computer lab**. It is important that you attend the lab you have been allocated to. Your attendance will be recorded, and you will not be allowed to sit this exam from any other location.

Accessing the LockDown Browser

Step 1: Log into the PC in the allocated Lab with your HWU credentials (e.g. abc123@hw.ac.uk) or if studying with a joint education partner, the credentials they have provided you with.

Step 2: Launch the **LockDown Browser** by double clicking on the LockDown Browser icon on the desktop. You will not be able to access the quiz from any other browser. If you are unable to launch LockDown Browser please raise your hand and inform the invigilator. You will be prompted to log into with your **Heriot-Watt Credentials**, please enter your full Heriot-Watt email address (e.g. abc123@hw.ac.uk) and password. This is applicable to all students, including those studying at a partner institution.

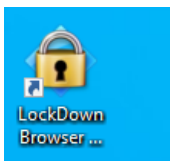


Fig 1: Lockdown Browser icon.

Step 3: Locate Your Course

Your Canvas Digital Exam will appear on the existing Canvas course site you use throughout the semester. Access the course as you normally would via the Dashboard or via the courses link on the left navigation menu.

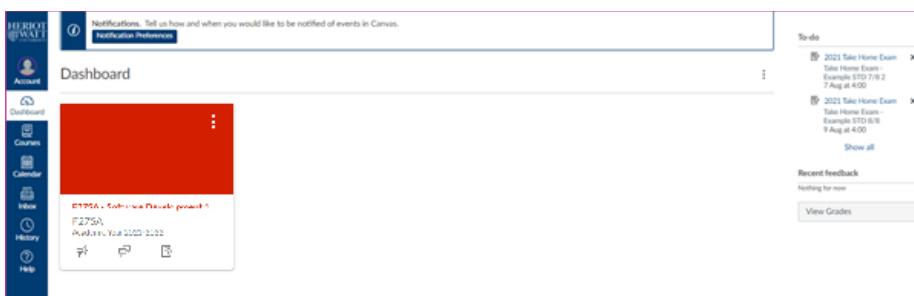


Fig 2: Dashboard

Within the Dashboard, click on the course tile or select the course from the Courses tab.



Fig 3: Courses

This will take you to the Home Page for your Course. Click on **Modules** and look for the module entitled **Canvas Digital Exam**. There you will see a page entitled **Exam Information**, please read this page carefully. Note if you are taking a **Stack** or **CodeRunner** Exams, please see **Appendix 1** at the end of this guide as the user interface varies from Exams using canvas quizzes.

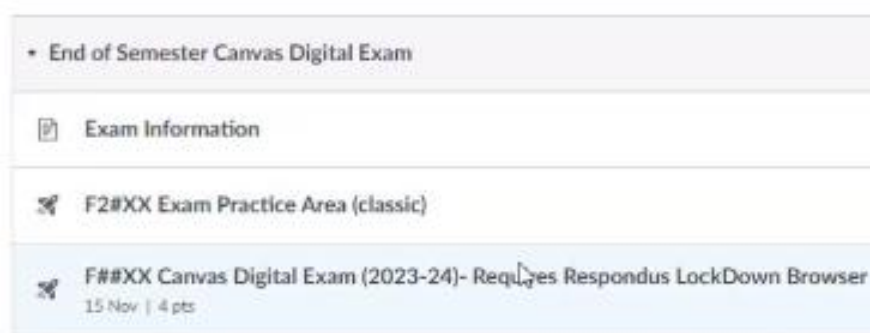


Fig 4: Exam Module

Click on **Exam Information** to review the exam instructions.

Exam Practice Area

Some courses may provide a **Practice Exam Area**, which can be found within **Modules**.

This will allow you to become familiar with the Canvas quiz interface. The practice area will contain at least three questions. Some courses may include additional questions or sample past paper.

Please note this practice area does not require LockDown Browser and **will not** be visible to you on the day of the exam.

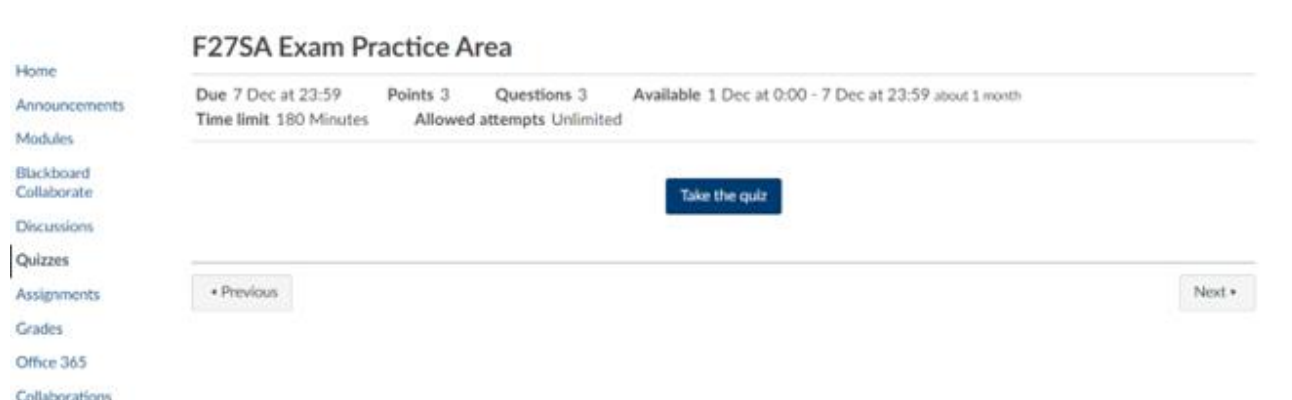


Fig 5: Exam Practice Area

Click **Take the quiz** to start the Practice Exam.

Quiz Interface

Questions will be presented one at a time on the screen. Depending on the question type, you should select or enter your answer on the screen. Click the **Next** button to progress to the next question. On the right-hand side of the screen, you will be able to view your progress through the questions and the remaining time. To return to earlier questions you can click on the question number on the right-hand menu or click the previous button.

F2#XX Exam Practice Area

Started: 15 Nov at 10:01

Quiz instructions

Questions

- ✓ Question 1
- ⌚ Question 2
- ⌚ Question 3

Time running: [Hide](#)
Attempt due: 7 Dec at 23:59
2 Hours, 58 minutes, 25 Seconds

Question 1

1 pts

What is the capital of Scotland

☐ Dundee

☐ Glasgow

☒ Edinburgh

☐ Inverness

Next ▶

Fig 6: Quiz Interface

Submitting the Practice Exam

Once you have completed all the questions click the **Submit quiz** button to submit the quiz. If you run out of time, the quiz will auto-submit at the scheduled end time.

Question 3

1 pts

Which countries are in the UK

☐ Ireland

☒ England

☐ France

☒ Scotland

Saved at 11:14

Submit quiz

Fig 7: Submitting the Practice Exam

Once you have submitted the Practice Exam you will see the screen below. The Practice Exam has unlimited attempts, and you can click to **Take the quiz again** if you wish to. Please note the Final Exam will be a **Single Attempt Only** and you will **NOT** be able to re-attempt it once submitted.

F2#XX Exam Practice Area

Due 7 Dec at 23:59 Points 3 Questions 3 Available 1 Dec at 0:00 - 7 Dec at 23:59
Time limit 180 Minutes Allowed attempts Unlimited

Take the quiz again

Attempt history

	Attempt	Time	Score
LATEST	Attempt 1	61 minutes	2 out of 3

Last attempt details:

Time: 61 minutes
Current score: 2 out of 3
Kept score: 2 out of 3

Unlimited attempts

[Take the quiz again](#)

(Will keep the highest of all your scores)

Fig 8: Re-attempting the Practice Exam

On The Day of Your Exam

Go to the **approved computer lab** you have been **allocated**. It is important you arrive 15-20 minutes early to log into the Canvas course. You will **not** be able to take the exam from any other location than the lab you have been allocated. Please log in to the PC with your email address and password (e.g. abc123@hw.ac.uk). Please visit the lab in advance to ensure you can log in before the day of the exam, and that you know what your password is. If you are at a partner institution, please log in to the PC using the credentials your institution has provided you.

Once you have logged into the PC, click on the **LockDown Browser** icon on the desktop, log in using your Heroit-Watt Email address (e.g. abc123@hw.ac.uk) and password, then navigate to the relevant course on **Canvas**. Within **Modules** click on the **F2#XX Canvas Digital Exam (20XX-YY) – Requires Respondus LockDown Browser** (F2#XX is the code for your course).

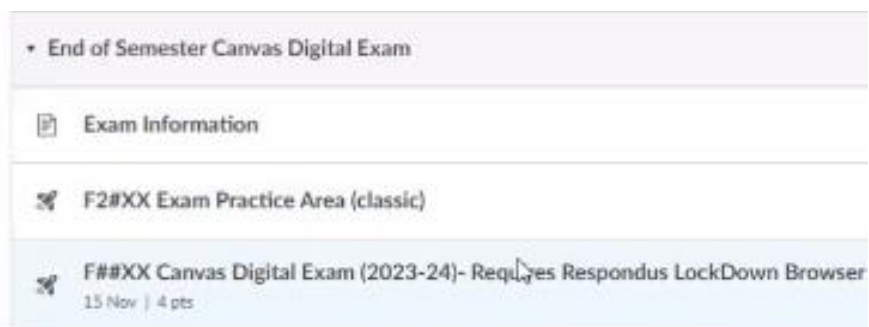


Fig 9: Canvas Digital Exam Module

If you click on the link before the start time you will see screen that the exam is currently locked. Please **refresh** this page at the designated start time.

D##XX Canvas Digital Exam (2023-24)- Requires Respondus LockDown Browser

Due 16 Nov at 15:30	Points 4	Questions 4	Available 16 Nov at 13:30 - 16 Nov at 15:30 2 hours
Time limit 120 Minutes		Requires Respondus LockDown Browser	

This quiz is locked until 16 Nov at 13:30.

Fig 10: Quiz Locked

At the designated start time, click on the link (or refresh the page if you already have). You will now see a **Take the quiz** button which you should click on.

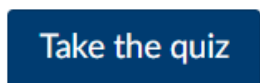


Fig 11: Take the quiz button

You will be prompted for an **Access code**. This will be read out by the invigilator at the start of the examination. You should enter the code immediately when requested and click submit. If you didn't hear the code, raise your hand and wait.

This quiz is restricted by an access code. You'll need to ask your teacher or proctor to type in or tell you the access code in order to take the quiz.

Access code:

Fig 12: Access code

During the Exam

During the exam you should only have the **LockDown Browser** window open containing the Canvas quiz. You must **not** attempt to open any other tabs, windows or applications, or attempt to navigate away from the LockDown Browser. Any attempt to do so will be considered a breach of exam regulations, will send a report to the invigilators and your course team, and will terminate your attempt at the exam. You must **not** attempt to lock the PC, as doing so will also trigger a report and terminate your exam attempt.

You should not attempt to communicate with anyone else within or outwith the lab. You will be monitored by invigilators during the exam and any attempt to view unauthorised material or communicate with anyone else will constitute a breach of examination regulations. If you experience any issues during the exam raise your hand to get the attention of the invigilator.

There is time factored into to the start of the exam to allow everyone to log into Canvas and enter the access code. If you start after this time, the duration will be reduced accordingly. The exam will be auto-submitted at the specified end time. **Note:** Canvas operates in UK time, therefore if you are outwith the UK, please see **Appendix 1** which shows how to set Canvas for your local time zone.

Use of Calculators

If your exam allows the use of calculators, an on-screen calculator will be available once you start. Click the calculator icon on the top navigation bar of LockDown Browser. The calculator will pop up.

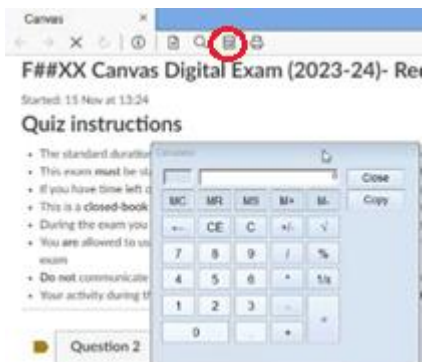


Fig 13: Calculator

Allowed resources

Most exams will be closed book, therefore only a single tab containing the quiz should be opened. Some exams may provide a list of clickable links to specified allowed resources (e.g. a formulae sheet), in which case you should only have tabs with the quiz and the allowable resources open. This will be displayed on opening page of the quiz.

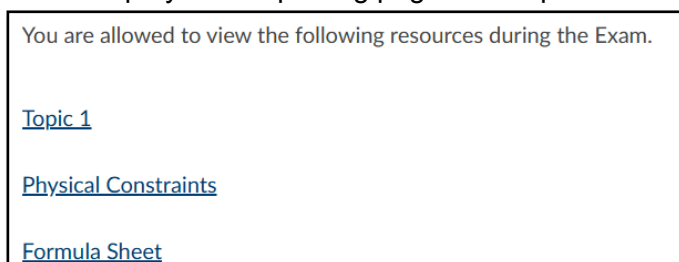


Fig 14: Example of Allowed resources.

Connection Issues or Pop-Up Notifications

If you lose connection during the quiz, or if you are presented with any pop-up notifications during the quiz, do not close them, and you must raise your hand to inform the invigilator immediately, who will instruct you how to proceed and continue with your exam

The invigilator will make a note of the issue and will instruct you how to resume the quiz.

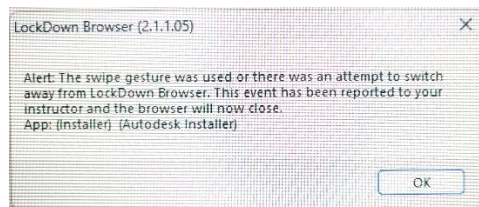


Fig 15: Alert

Submitting the Exam

Ensure you have completed as many exam questions as you can. If you finish early, you can review the questions before Submitting the Quiz. Please note once you click the **Submit quiz** button you **will not** be able to return to the quiz. You **will not** be allowed to leave the venue within the first hour. To leave the exam once the first hour has passed, please raise your hand to ask the invigilator who will ensure you have submitted your quiz before you leave the room.

If you run out of time, the quiz will auto-submit at the scheduled end time. Once you have submitted the quiz you will see a screen like the one below. The quiz scores **will not** be made available immediately after the exams as the marks need to be approved by the relevant assessment boards.

You must show the invigilator this screen.

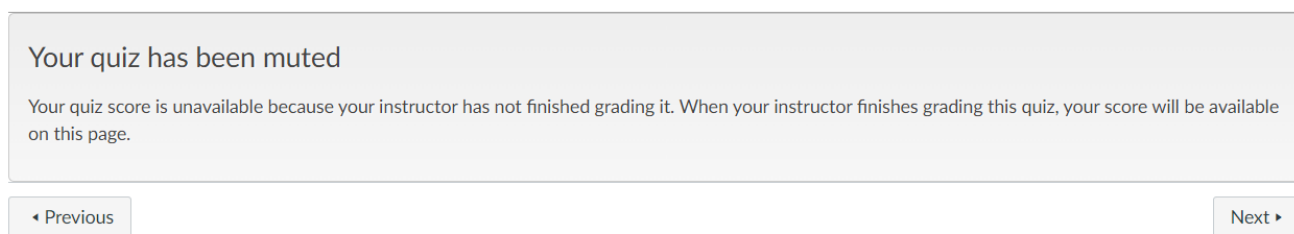


Fig 16: Submitted Exam

Top Tips Continued

- | |
|--|
| 3. Ensure you know which lab you have been allocated. |
| 4. Ensure you know which Canvas course your exam is located on. |
| 5. Ensure you have tried the practice area and are familiar with the quiz interface. |
| 6. Ensure you arrive 10-15 minutes early to allow time to log into the PC. |
| 7. Ensure you are not late (if you arrive more than 30 minutes late you will not be permitted to take the exam). |

Appendix 1 – Stack/CodeRunner

If you have been told that your exam will use **Stack** or **CodeRunner**, you will access the Lockdown Browser the same way as any other exam and navigate to the course code.

Under the **Modules** Area go to **End of Semester Exam Module** within which there will be a link to **Stack** or **CodeRunner**. Click on the link and then click **Launch Lockdown Browser**. If you receive a pop-up message informing you that the quiz is going to launch in lockdown browser, click **OK**.

Respondus LockDown Browser is required for this exam.

[Download LockDown Browser](#) | [Check your LockDown Browser Setup](#)



Fig 17: Launch Lockdown Browser

Once Respondus Lockdown Browser opens, click **Start Quiz**.

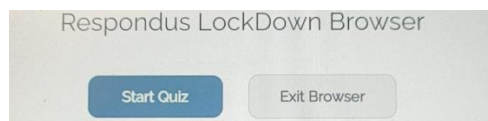


Fig 18: Launch Lockdown Browser

You will be prompted to enter the **Password** which will be provided by the invigilator and then click **Start Attempt**. Note the password is case sensitive.

Password

To attempt this quiz you need to know the quiz password

Quiz password

Click to enter text 

Time limit

Your attempt will have a time limit of 2 hours. When you start, the timer will begin to count down and cannot be paused. You must finish your attempt before it expires. Are you sure you wish to start now?

Start attempt Cancel

Fig 19: Password, Time Limit and Start Attempt.

Stack/Code Runner Quiz Interface

Navigate between questions using the **Previous Page** and **Next Page** buttons or using the **Quiz navigation** panel. You can view the time remaining in the upper right of the screen. If you wish to return to a question, you can click the **Flag Question** button underneath the question number. You can view the Time Left at the top of the screen.

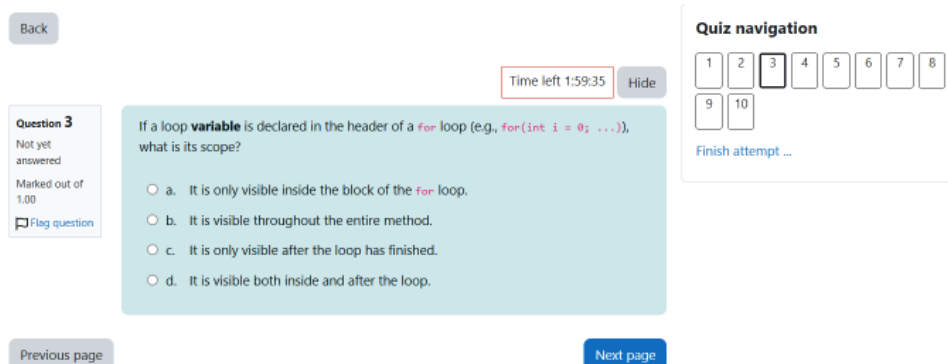


Fig 20: Stack/CodeRunner Quiz Interface

For CodeRunner questions, please enter or update the code as described in the question and press Check to see if your code passes the test cases (or if it produces a syntax error).

//Type your single line of code in the box below:

Check

Fig 21: Checking CodeRunner Answer

CodeRunner questions may incur a penalty regime which indicates how many attempts you can make before losing a percentage of the mark. The penalty regime below would allow 2 wrong attempts, before 10% deduction for each following wrong attempt.

(penalty regime: 0, 0, 10, 20, ... %)

Fig 22: CodeRunner Penalty regime

For Stack questions, your answer will be rendered on screen. Please check your answer displays as intended before submitting your answer.

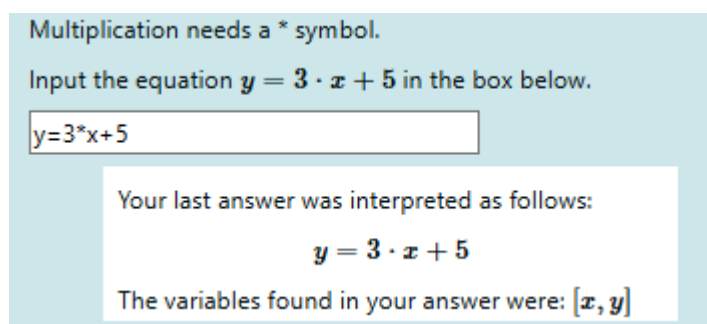


Fig 23: Example of a stack question

Once you have finished the exam click the **Finish Attempt** link located in the quiz navigation panel.



Fig 24: Finish attempt

You will then be shown a screen displaying a summary of which questions you have attempted. If you

are sure you have finished, please press **Submit all and finish**

This attempt must be submitted by Monday, 17 November 2025, 6:16 PM.

Submit all and finish

Fig 25: Submitting a Stack/CodeRunner Exam

If you have left a Stack/CodeRunner question unanswered you will receive a message on screen detailing which questions have no response. Only press **Submit all and finish** if you are sure that you intentionally didn't provide an answer.

Submit all your answers and finish?

×

Once you submit your answers, you won't be able to change them.

Questions without a response: 10

Cancel

Submit all and finish

Fig 26: Questions with no response

Once you have submitted your Stack/Code Runner exam you will see a message with the status Finished (it is important you raise your hand and show this to the invigilator before leaving). You can then close LockDown browser, sign out of the PC and leave the venue.

Four attempts

Attempt 1	
Status	Finished
Started	Monday, 17 November 2025, 4:16 PM
Completed	Monday, 17 November 2025, 4:48 PM
Duration	32 mins 10 secs
Review not permitted	

Fig 27: Status Finished

Occasionally, the Ace editor fails to load on CodeRunner questions. If this happens you will see the message below, please click to a different question and then return and the Ace editor should load. If the issue persists, raise your hand and inform the invigilator.

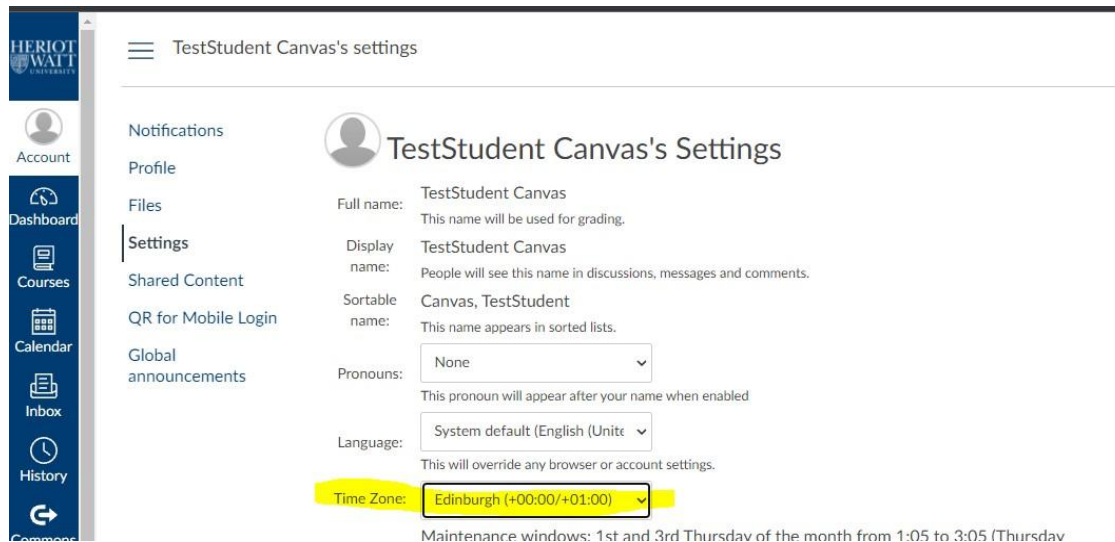
Ace editor not ready. Perhaps reload page?
Falling back to raw text area.

Fig 28: Ace Editor not ready.

Appendix 2

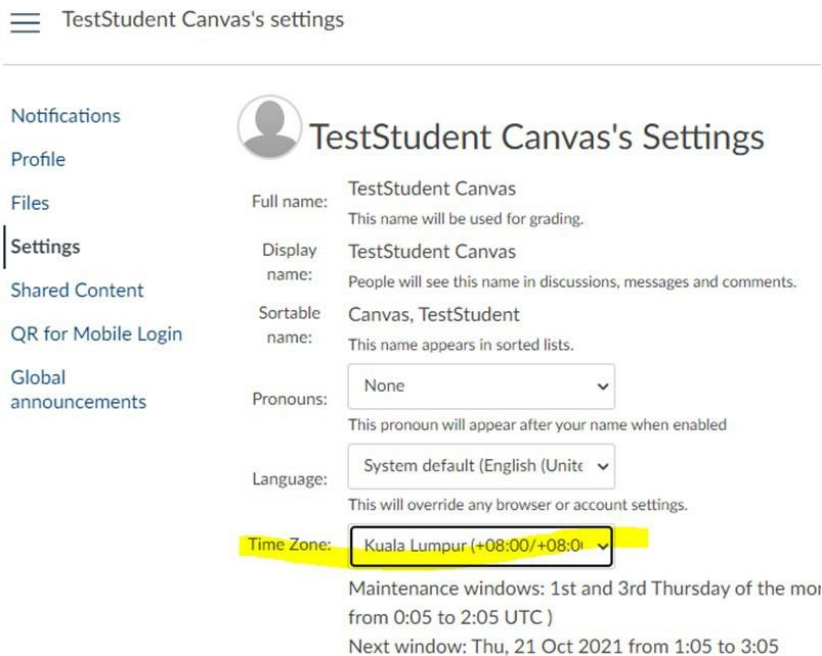
Instructions to change the default time zone on Canvas to your local time

Select Account and Settings from the menu on the left-hand side. You will see that the Time Zone is set to Edinburgh:



The screenshot shows the 'TestStudent Canvas's settings' page. On the left sidebar, the 'Settings' option is selected. The main content area is titled 'TestStudent Canvas's Settings'. Under the 'Time Zone' section, the dropdown menu is set to 'Edinburgh (+00:00/+01:00)'. Below this, the 'Maintenance windows' section shows a window for the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 1:05 to 3:05 (Thursday).

You can select the time zone you require from the dropdown menu, for example Malaysia.



The screenshot shows the 'TestStudent Canvas's settings' page with the 'Time Zone' dropdown menu set to 'Kuala Lumpur (+08:00/+08:00)'. Below this, the 'Maintenance windows' section shows a window for the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 0:05 to 2:05 UTC, with the next window on Thursday, 21 Oct 2021 from 1:05 to 3:05.

All times in Canvas will now be displayed to you in local time.