

A Practical Guide for Academics to support Continuous Assessment

Creating MCQ Questions for Moodle Quizzes Using Copilot and the AIKEN Format

Introduction

This guide walks academics through creating Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) using Copilot in the AIKEN format which makes importing these questions into Moodle very straight forward. The whole process can be completed in a matter of minutes by academic colleagues.

If academic teams wish to offer Continuous Assessment to their students, this guide is designed to support academics in that endeavor.

As stated in the official guidance for Continuous Assessment, it is the responsibility of the module team to produce Continuous Assessment mechanisms (tasks, quizzes, questions, worksheets, etc) and make them available to students. This may include printing and collection of worksheets, setting up and administering Moodle quizzes, etc. The CADI team will gladly offer training to academic teams to make this work sustainable and to help support digital confidence within academic teams. The new Assessment Information Collection process (improved MMS process) asks for an overview of intended CA approaches to help CADI designing appropriate training for staff.

Important

Recent academic policy changes support the option for academics to include Continuous Assessment within their teaching programmes. A number of online teaching tools are available to support Continuous Assessment, including the Moodle quiz.

The CADI Digital team actively support academics with the Moodle quiz for **summative high-stakes**, scheduled online exams during [designated University Assessment and Referral Periods](#). This endeavor is incredibly time consuming and essential to the smooth

delivery of high-stakes assessments at the University, especially considering reduced staffing levels within the DLD team post-Reset.

General function principals for Moodle Quiz based Continuous Assessment (Weekly asynchronous summative quizzes):

- Respondus Lock-down browser should not be used for Continuous Assessments.
- **Academics should create their own multiple-choice questions for these assessments and the accompanying Moodle quizzes.** Generative AI tools are available which make this process easy and sustainable for academics to do themselves (step-by-step guide below).
- A substantial number of questions are already available on Moodle (over 1.2 million) which can be reused easily.
- Training is available from the CADI team to help academics feel comfortable with producing these questions and quizzes.
- **CADI Digital cannot produce questions or Moodle quizzes for low-stakes Continuous Assessments due to the unsustainable workload this would produce. Academics are subject knowledge experts in their own fields and are best placed to write and evaluate question quality.**
- Having digitally confident academics able to produce the associated questions and quizzes for their Continuous Assessments, can make it a sustainable choice for your module.

Continuous Assessment (CA) represents a **low-stakes assessment** designed to check the engagement of students and to reduce exam anxiety. These assessments could take the form of 8 shorter Moodle quizzes conducted once a week over an 8-week period, in a normal computer lab where the best 5 out of 8 quizzes count towards the overall CA mark.

Continuous Assessments of this type **do not need to be conducted in a lockdown browser environment under strict exam conditions** with most quizzes happening within the class. Using a lockdown browser would present a logistic overhead which is not necessary for this type of assessment which is intended to be low-stakes, non-intimidating for students and aimed at reducing exam anxiety.

What is the AIKEN Format?

The AIKEN format is a simple, text-based structure used for writing MCQs that can be easily imported into Moodle. Each question is followed by a list of answer options, with the

correct answer clearly indicated. The format is straightforward and ideal for batch uploading questions ([example available here](#)).

Generative AI tools including Microsoft Copilot are excellent at creating MCQ questions in the AIKEN format so academics can produce and upload questions to Moodle within minutes.

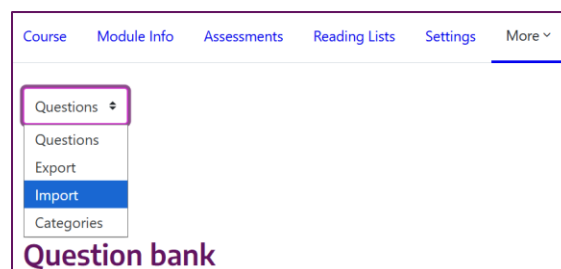
Steps to Create MCQs Using Copilot and the AIKEN Format

1. Define Your Learning Objectives
2. **Use Copilot to Generate MCQ Content**
 - a. Here's an example prompt for use with Copilot which can be adapted to different subject areas:

“Please create 5 MCQ questions on thermodynamics in **AIKEN** format for import into Moodle”

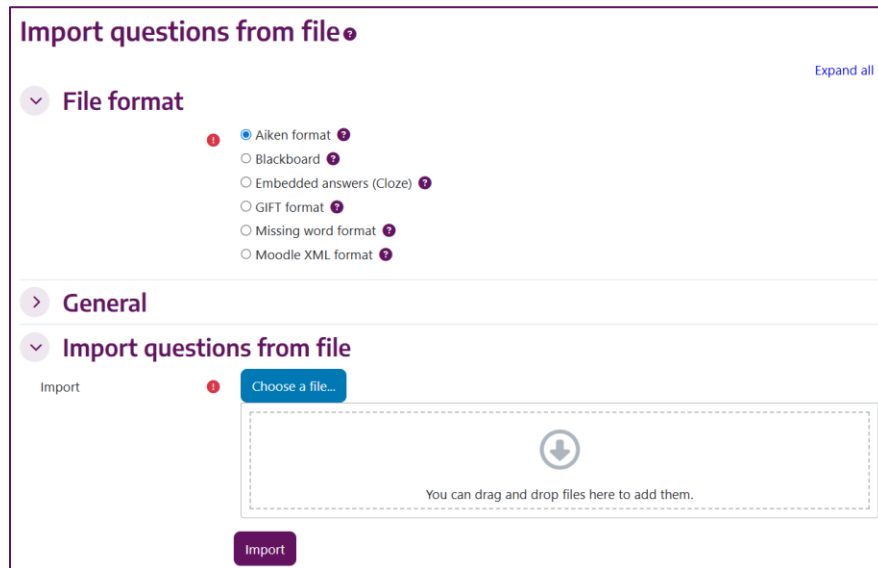
[Here's an example of the types of questions and format the prompt will create.](#)

- b. Review the generated questions for clarity, accuracy, and relevance. Academics are best placed to evaluate the appropriateness of AI-generated questions.
 - c. Edit as needed to match your module requirements.
3. *Copy the questions into AIKEN format to MS Notepad and save the file as a .txt file.*
 4. **Import the AIKEN File into Moodle**
 - a. *Log in to your Moodle module.*
 - b. *Access the Question bank: More > Question bank*
 - c. *Select "Import" from the Questions dropdown menu.*



- d. *Choose "Aiken" as the format.*

- e. Upload your .txt file under 'Import questions from file'
- f. Press the 'Import' button.



The screenshot shows the 'Import questions from file' interface. At the top, there is a title 'Import questions from file' with an 'Expand all' link. Below this is a 'File format' section with a dropdown arrow and a list of radio buttons: 'Aiken format' (selected), 'Blackboard', 'Embedded answers (Cloze)', 'GIFT format', 'Missing word format', and 'Moodle XML format'. Each option has a help icon. Below the 'File format' section is a 'General' section with a right-pointing arrow. Underneath is the 'Import questions from file' section, which includes a 'Choose a file...' button, a dashed box with a download icon and the text 'You can drag and drop files here to add them.', and an 'Import' button at the bottom.

Tips for Writing Effective MCQs

- Make questions clear and unambiguous.
- Avoid trick questions and focus on assessing understanding.
- Use plausible distractors (incorrect answers) to encourage critical thinking (Generative AI is great at creating useful distractors)
- Randomise the answer order to prevent patterns.
- Review questions for bias and accessibility.

Leveraging Copilot for Efficiency

Copilot can help generate MCQs quickly, suggest plausible distractors, and check for grammatical errors. Academics can use Copilot to draft large sets of questions and refine them for quality and alignment with learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Before creating questions, clarify what you want students to learn or demonstrate. Align your MCQs with these objectives to ensure meaningful assessment.

By combining Copilot's AI capabilities with the AIKEN format, academics can efficiently create, format, and upload MCQs to Moodle quizzes. This process saves time, enhances

question quality, and supports effective student assessment. Training is available from CADI to support this endeavor and [can be booked here](#).