

Typical Scantron Problems

It is the responsibility of the student and the instructor to have Scantron sheets correctly completed. Improperly completed or incomplete Scantron exams can result in incorrectly graded exam(s).

How the Scantron machine works

The Scantron machine scans exams one at a time, recording which boxes have been shaded on an exam form. If the machine is unable to scan an exam, it will reject the student's exam for later examination by EDC staff and instructors.

The machine **CANNOT** read:

- Forms that are **damaged, bent**, or have **folded corners**.
This obscures the bar code/timing lines and will cause the exam to be rejected. EDC staff will try to resolve the issue and rescan the exam.
- Forms that have pencil **marks over the bar code black lines on the left hand side** of the exam.
Each exam sheet contains small black bars along the left side of the page. These bars are used to line up the form and locate the questions. Drawings and/or writings on these bars cause an exam to be rejected. EDC staff will try to erase marks and rescan the exam.

Potential Problems that Can Affect a Student's Mark

- Student does not fill in the exam version number on multi-version exam, or fills it incorrectly, for example: 02 instead of 2, etc.
Check the "**Problem_Keys.txt**" file for students who did not fill in the exam version and hand mark these exams.
- A pen was used to complete the exam form rather than a pencil
Ink cannot be erased. When a student makes an error, s/he will often cross off the answer and fill in another box. Questions with two shaded boxes will be marked incorrect even if the student crosses off the original answer. These exams should be hand marked.
- Circled or very lightly filled in boxes
Students always must **shade** the appropriate boxes. Check marks, circled boxes or other marks will **NOT** be read by the machine. Very lightly shaded boxes will not be scanned, too. In all cases, the student will usually receive an abnormally low mark. Requires hand marking.
- A column of the form was jumped
A student may skip a column on the exam sheet due to exam stress or unfamiliarity with the Scantron exam form. This problem is usually discovered when the affected student asks to see

their exam. Requires hand marking.

- **Offset Answers**
A student may unintentionally offset their answers on the Scantron exam form. Answers on the form will not correspond to the order of the exam questions. The student's grade for the exam will usually be abnormally low. This problem is usually discovered when the affected student asks to see their exam. Requires hand marking.
- **Severe incomplete erasing**
If a student changes her or his answer and does not completely erase his/her mistake, it can lead to a student receiving no mark for the question. The Scantron machine can only read one answer per question. Requires hand marking.

To prepare your students and instruct them on how to fill in Scantron answer sheets properly, you may want to download a document titled "**Scantron Instructions for Students**" from the EDC website (<http://edc.carleton.ca/publications-scantron.php>) and distribute it before the exam.

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