

# Design for Testability

17-423/723 Software System Design

Recitation 5  
Feb 13, 2026

## Activity: Testability

Consider a feature in an online shopping site that allows a customer to pay for an item in multiple installments over a period of time. For example, an item that costs \$1000 can be paid in 4 installments of \$250, with payments being made 1 month apart (e.g., Feb 14, March 15, April 15, May 15). The following class, **InstallmentGenerate**, is used to generate a series of installments and store them into a database.

(See handout)

# Q1. What are different test cases that should be considered to test the correctness of the installment generation feature?

## **Normal input:**

cart.value() = 1000, numberOfInstallments = 4

## **Boundary cases:**

cart.value() = 1000, numberOfInstallments = 0

cart.value() = 1000, numberOfInstallments = -5

cart.value() = 0, numberOfInstallments = 4

cart.value() = -50, numberOfInstallments = 4

numberOfInstallments = 15 (payment over a year)

numberOfInstallments = 4, nextInstallmentDueDate = Jan 30

- Test the corner case with February (e.g., Jan 30, Feb 28, Mar 30, April 30)

**Q2. List one controllability challenge and one observability challenge in testing this component.**

**Controllability:**

- It's difficult to test the component under a particular state of the database.
- It's difficult to test the component under a particular date for the first installment (e.g., nextInstallmentDueDate)

**Observability:**

- The method does not return any value, and it's difficult to test whether a correct list of installments is created for the given pair of input arguments.

```
public class InstallmentGenerator {  
  
    // Handle to installment database  
    private InstallmentDB db;  
  
    public InstallmentGenerator(InstallmentRepository repository) {  
        // Connect to the installment database at "dbAddress"  
        this.db = InstallmentDB.connect(dbAddress);  
    }  
  
    public void generateInstallments(ShoppingCart cart, int numberofInstallments) {  
        // First installment begins today  
        LocalDate nextInstallmentDueDate = LocalDate.now();  
        // Calculate the amount per each installment  
        double amountPerInstallment = cart.getValue() / numberofInstallments;  
  
        for(int i = 1; i <= numberofInstallments; i++) {  
            // Every installment is 30 days apart  
            nextInstallmentDueDate = nextInstallmentDueDate.plusMonths(1);  
            Installment newInstallment =  
                new Installment(nextInstallmentDueDate, amountPerInstallment);  
            // Store each installment in the database  
            this.db.persist(newInstallment);  
        }  
    }  
}
```

## Controllability:

- It's difficult to test the component under a particular state of the database.
- It's difficult to test the component under a particular date for the first installment (e.g., `nextInstallmentDueDate`)

## Observability:

- The method does not return any value, and it's difficult to test whether a correct list of installments is created for the given pair of input arguments.

### Q3. What modifications would you make to the design of the component to improve its testability?

- Replace the reference to the database with an abstract Repository interface
- Inject repository into the class through the constructor; improve controllability
- Inject “today” into the class through the “generateInstallments” method; improve controllability
- Modify “generateInstallments” by having it return the list of installments; improve observability

## Q4. What are pre-conditions and post-conditions for the method generateInstallments?

Pre-conditions:

- `numberOfInstallments` is between 1 and `MAX_NUM_INSTALLMENTS`
- `cart != null` and `cart.value() > 0`

Post-conditions:

- Number of actual installments is same as `numberOfInstallments`
- The total amount of installments is same as `cart.getValue()`

