UNIVERSITY OF Cincinnati

AN INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE   2ND EDITION

Blackboard Support Team, University of Cincinnati

Blackboard Basics & Beyond

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Edited by Chris M. Collins

Contributing Authors

Chris M. Collins
Debra Brandenburg
Sujata Prakash
Stacey Carney
Paul Foster

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1

What is Blackboard?

This chapter will introduce you to the Blackboard software and explain how Blackboard is used at the University of Cincinnati.

Blackboard is software that allows instructors to easily place course materials online, a communication tool that allows instructors and students to collaborate in new and exciting ways, and a portal to other web services at the University of Cincinnati.

The terrific thing about using Blackboard is that you don't have to be a computer programmer to build your own course web pages. Creating course material online is easier than you may think. With this manual, we show you step-by-step how to set up a Blackboard course.

I C O N   K E Y

📂 Valuable information

🖥 Online exercise

Blackboard was chosen by a faculty committee to be the course management software for the University of Cincinnati community. Since it was introduced as a pilot program in Fall Quarter 2000, Blackboard has quickly become the University's academic portal. More then half of UC instructors had at least once class on Blackboard in the 2003-2004 academic year.

> To begin building your course right away, skip to **Chapter 3, Basic Course Building**. This chapter will lead you step-by-step through the process and in less than 30 minutes you will have created your first course on Blackboard!

Course Creation

Since Blackboard was integrated with the Registrar's database in Autumn Quarter 2001, all courses listed in an instructor's "My Courses" module reflect what is officially

listed with the Registrar. Courses are automatically created in Blackboard based on the information listed in the Registrar's system.

If you are teaching a class that does not appear in your list, then the course has not been properly entered into the Registrar's database. If this happens, ask your department head to update the Registrar's office with the course number, section numbers that you will be teaching, and with you listed as the primary instructor of record. Once the update has been made to the Registrar's office, the course will appear in your list on Blackboard within 48 hours.

Student Enrollment

Because Blackboard is integrated with the Registrar's database, student enrollments are automatically added and removed from Blackboard course sites throughout the quarter. Course add/drops are processed within a 24 to 48 hour time frame. Additionally, students are removed from Blackboard courses at the end of the quarter. Watch your email for notices from the Blackboard Support Team at the end of each quarter for details about continuing courses or how to handle students with Incompletes.

Instructors should not need to add or remove any officially registered students in their Blackboard course sites. The only time you should use the Add User or Remove User function is to add unregistered students (attending unofficially), TAs or Co-Instructors, or other colleagues. If an instructor manually adds a student who should be officially registered for the course (and thus automatically added to the course), the automatic tools that govern student enrollment procedures will not work for that particular student. Instructors can avoid this problem by simply ensuring that all students who are taking the class for credit are properly enrolled in the course through the Registrar. Once a student is properly enrolled, s/he will automatically be added to the appropriate courses.

Intellectual Property Policy

As the instructor of record, you have complete responsibility for the management of your Blackboard course sites. Officially registered students are automatically added to Blackboard courses for the sake of convenience, but no other person is enrolled without an instructor's permission.

Because Blackboard is password protected and only students registered for the course are given automatic access to your course site, material placed in the site is not considered to be placed in the public domain per se. However, instructors should use copyright protected material under the "Fair Use" copyright doctrine or obtain permission from the copyright holder to place material in Blackboard, just as you would in your classroom.

The instructor of record is responsible for all material placed in the Blackboard course site; therefore, instructors who use copyright protected material outside of the "Fair Use" standard may be liable. Instructors also control whether or not Guest Access is enabled. If you place copyright protected material in your course and then enable Guest Access (opening up your Blackboard course site to the public), then that may be an infringement of copyright.

What's the bottom line? If you would feel comfortable using the material in your classroom, you should feel comfortable using it in your Blackboard course site as long as Guest Access isn't enabled. If it is something that you would get permission to use or pay for before using it in your classroom, then you should get permission/pay for it before you place it on Blackboard.

For more information about copyright, please contact the Office of General Counsel at (513) 556-3483.

Using This Manual

Ideally, you will be using this manual in front of your computer screen as you log into Blackboard and begin using the many tools described in the upcoming chapters. This manual was written as a step-by-step approach to learning how to use the Blackboard software, though there are certainly other ways to become familiar with it. Clicking on every link and button is a great way to discover many of the features in Blackboard, but for the novice user, it may be best to follow along with this guide and then explore once you are more familiar with the general layout and navigation.

At this time, the examples used in this manual are specific to the Internet Explorer browser using a Windows operating system. Mac users may go to the Blackboard Support site at http://blackboard.uc.edu/support/ to view specific tips for Mac operating systems.

Getting Started

This chapter will walk you through the login process and show you how to navigate through Blackboard.

T He web address for the UC Blackboard server is http://blackboard.uc.edu. To use the website, you must have a connection to the Internet and a supported web browser. At this time, the software maker supports Internet Explorer versions 6.0 or higher **or** Netscape Navigator 7.1 or higher for Windows users. The following browsers are supported for Macintosh users: Internet Explorer 5.2 **or** Netscape 7.1

Connect to the Internet and open your web browser. Type or paste the URL above into your web browser's "Address" or "Location" bar at the top of the screen.

> The URL or web address for Blackboard at UC is http://blackboard.uc.edu **not** blackboard.com, the corporate software company's site. Due to the popularity of the "dot com" domain, many users accidentally go to the wrong address.

Activate Your Account & Log In

If you have never used Blackboard before, you will need to activate your account to receive your username and password. From the Blackboard login screen, click the "Activate Account" button and fill out the form to receive your account information. A valid email address is required to obtain an account on the Blackboard system. Once you have your account information, click the "Log In" link to enter your username and password.

The first screen you see after you log in is called the "My UC" page, and from this page you can navigate to all of the different areas of Blackboard. The My UC tab is visible from every screen. Clicking on it will take you back to this first screen if you ever find yourself lost in the software.

The "My UC" Page

The "My UC" page has five major areas:
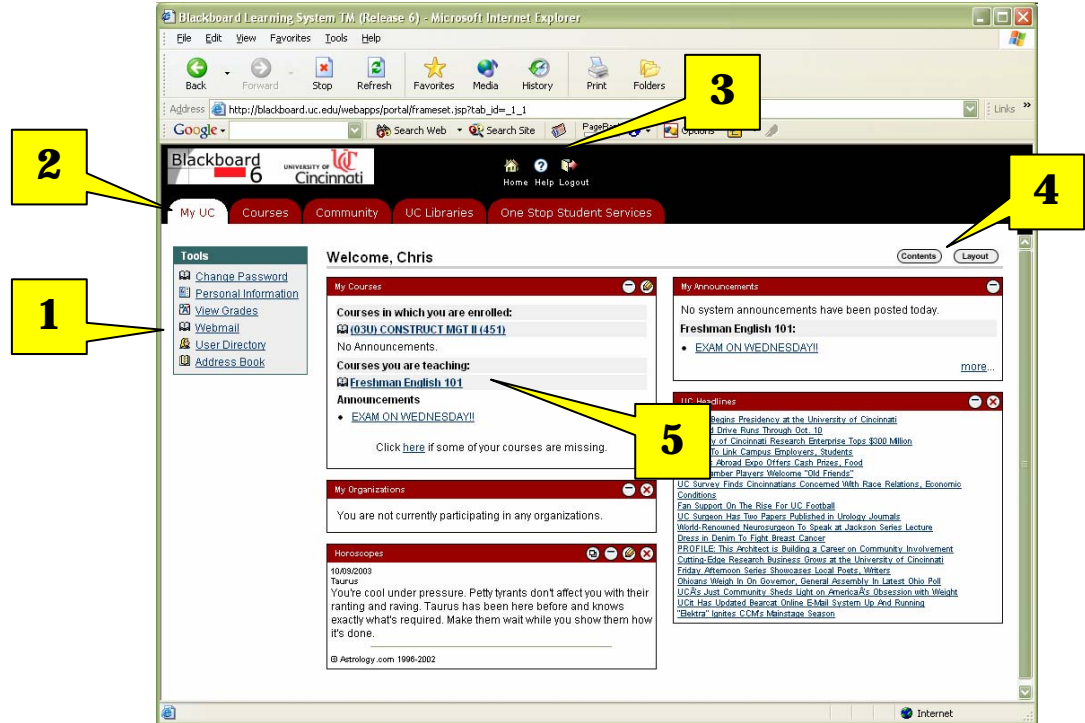
Major areas of the My UC page

1. **Tools:** The Tools box at the upper left side of the page contains links to several tools, which are outlined later in this chapter.

2. **Tabs:** The tabs at the top of the screen allow you to navigate back to the My UC page, or go to the online Course Catalog, the One Stop Student Services webpage, or the Libraries webpage.

3. **Help & Logout:** The Help button opens a new window to the Frequently Asked Question list and other valuable information on the Blackboard Support Site. All users must click the Logout button to end their Blackboard session before closing the window.

4. **Contents and Layout:** The Contents and Layout buttons allow users to customize the order and types of modules that appear on the My UC page. There are many useful/fun modules that can be added to the My UC page, like sports scores, stock tickers, or even your daily horoscope!

5. **Modules:** The various boxes that appear in the main part of the window are called modules, and they are labeled according to their function. The "My Courses" module is the main entrance to a user's course list.

Change your password from the default for better security!
Click the "Change Password" link in the Tools box. Enter your new password twice for verification and then click "Submit" to save your changes.

Navigating with the Tabs

The tabs at the top of the screen are always visible in the Blackboard window. Simply click on the tab to navigate to that particular area of Blackboard.
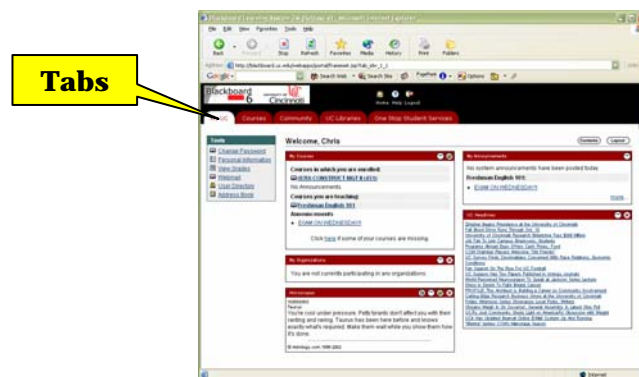
Where do the Tabs take you?

The "My UC" Tab: Clicking on this tab will always bring you back to the entry page (the first page you see when you log in). This is useful when you want to switch to another course, use a different module, or access any of your personal Tools.

The "Courses" Tab: This tab contains two items: your complete list of courses and the online Course Catalog. The Course List on the left side lists every course on Blackboard of which you are a member – whether you are a student or an instructor.

The online Course Catalog is searchable by course name or number, or you can look for courses by choosing the appropriate college and quarter. This list only shows courses that are actively using Blackboard (marked "Available").

The "One Stop" Tab: The One Stop tab links to the One Stop Student Services website. From here, students can check their grades, register for courses, view and pay their bill, and much more. The One Stop page opens in a new window.

The "UC Libraries" Tab: This tab links to the UC Libraries webpages, where students can search the library catalog, view tutorials on using library resources, and much more.
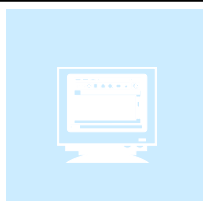
The "My Courses" Module

This module is the gateway to your Blackboard courses. By default, every course you are teaching will display on the list. Simply click on the name of a course to enter the course site on Blackboard.
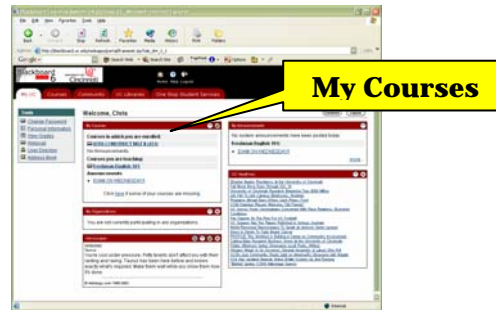
**Customize the My Courses module**

The My Courses module can also be customized to display the specific courses you wish to use in Blackboard. To edit the list, click the small pencil icon in the upper right corner of the module. In the next screen, you can select which courses display in your list, and what information associated with that course will appear beneath the course name. If you de-select a course, it will no longer appear in your My Courses module; however, you can always see your entire course list by clicking on the "Courses" tab at the top of the screen.

> Click on the small pencil icon on your **"My Courses"** module and remove any courses that you don't plan to use on Blackboard. Experiment with the various options to see how you want your module to look. **This feature only works for classes in which you are a Student or Instructor.** TA's do not have this functionality.

The Tools Box

The gray box on the upper left side of the screen contains links to many features that you can use to enhance your Blackboard experience.
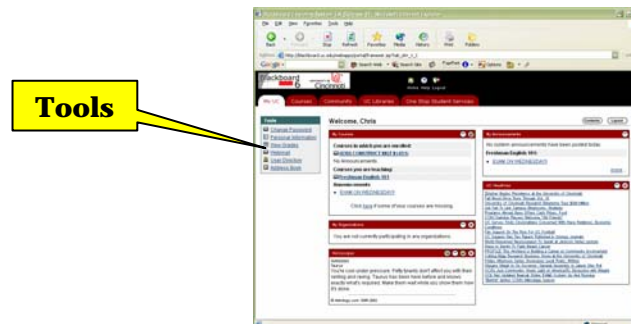
What do the Tools do?

- The **Change Password** link allows users to reset their password to one of their own choosing.

- The **Personal Information** link allows you to change your password, edit your privacy settings, and edit your personal information to change your email address or name.

- The **View Grades** link is primarily for students' use – but instructors can be students too! Grades will only appear in this link if the instructor for the course has entered grades in the Online Gradebook in Blackboard and has made the Gradebook available to students. This is not the official grade report for the University. To view the official grades, students must click on the One Stop Student Services tab.

- **Webmail** allows you to access your Bearcat Online (BOL) email account. With this easy web access link, you can check and send email on the go.

- The **User Directory** is a list of every Blackboard user who has changed his or her privacy settings to allow public display of selected information in the directory. Users who leave their settings at the default "private" setting do not show up in the directory.

- Forgot that important phone number? Use the **Address Book** to store friends' and colleagues' contact information, and you can get the information you need wherever you have access to the Internet.

Chapter

3

Basic Course Building

Creating a basic course in Blackboard is easier than you think! This chapter will guide you step-by-step through the process of creating a basic course.

O nce you have chosen the course you plan to work on and gathered all of the documents you plan to place in the course in electronic format, it is time to begin course building. Remember, until you make a course "Available," students cannot see your Blackboard course, even if you have already uploaded material.

In this chapter, we will:

- Examine the Control Panel, where all course building is done.

- Upload your syllabus and add a welcome announcement to your course.

- Make your course "Available" or visible to students.

- Use the communication tools to send an email to your entire class and set up a Discussion Board for online conversation.

- Learn how to add co-instructors or teaching assistants to your Blackboard course.

To begin working on your course, click on the name of the course in the "My Courses" module on the My UC page. Then click the gray Control Panel button, located in the left frame below the colored course buttons.

The Control Panel

The diagram below shows the location of the "breadcrumb trail." This series of links allows you to navigate through the various areas of the Control Panel or you may click the course name to return to the "student view." Each of the six sections of the Control Panel is described below.
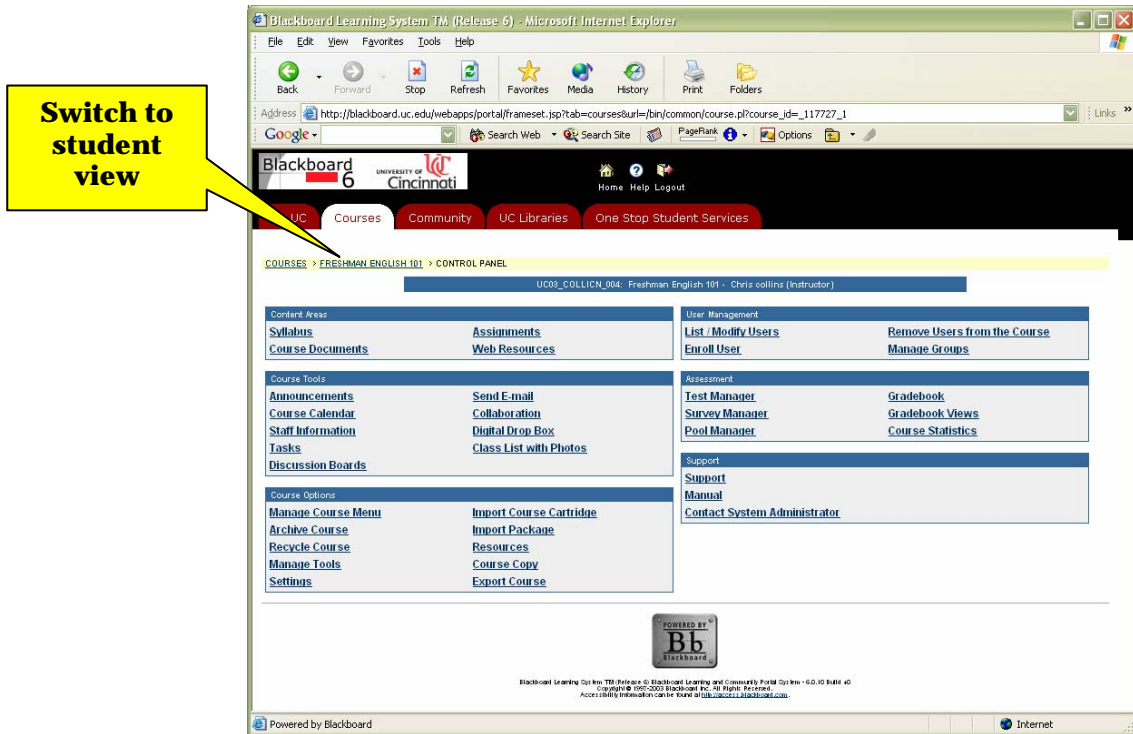
Major areas of the Control Panel

1. **Content Areas:** Links to the areas of your course where you will add course material. In this section, you will learn how to add your syllabus.

2. **Course Tools:** Setup or use communication tools and specially formatted areas of the course in this section.

3. **Course Options:** Create the perfect course for your needs by customizing the settings and options. Make your course visible to students in this area.

4. **User Management:** Add or Remove users, view the student class list with "List/Modify Users," or set up groups in this section.

5. **Assessment:** Create question pools, online assessments and surveys, or use the gradebook here. See **Chapter 5, Assessments & Gradebook,** for more information on this section.

6. **Support:** Contact the Blackboard Support Team or view the Instructor Manual produced by Blackboard.com in this section of the Control Panel.

Uploading Your Syllabus

The first item that most instructors want to place in their online course site is a copy of the course syllabus

Prepare your syllabus: Before attempting this task, you should already have your syllabus typed and saved in a common electronic file format. We recommend using MS Word, Notepad, or another plain text word processor to create your syllabus, since most students have software installed on their computer to open these files. Also, instructors should eliminate spaces or non-alpha numeric characters from file names. To prevent problems opening the file, only underscores should be used to space out file names. For example, **"english_comp_101.doc"** is acceptable, but **"English Comp-101.doc"** is not.

Upload your syllabus

To upload your syllabus:

- Click the **"Syllabus"** link in the Content Areas section of the Control Panel.

- Click the **"Add Item"** button in the upper left corner.

- Use the default **name or rename** the document with the pull down menu or in the text box provided.

- Scroll down to the Content Attachments section and click the **"Browse"** button to locate your syllabus (located on your computer).

- Once you have located the syllabus on your computer, click to highlight the file and then click the **"Open"** button.

- Scroll to the bottom of the screen and click **"Submit"** to save your changes to Blackboard.

Once you have added your syllabus to the course, you will receive a receipt letting you know that the upload was successful. Click the "OK" button to acknowledge the receipt, and the next screen will allow you to test your document. Click on the underlined file name to verify that the syllabus opens and displays properly.

If you find a mistake in your syllabus, you will have to click the "Remove" button to the right of the current version of the file on Blackboard and then re-upload a corrected version. The software used to create a file must also be used to edit it. Once you have corrected the document, remove the incorrect version from Blackboard, and then upload the corrected file as described above.

Adding an Announcement

Now that you have uploaded the syllabus, you can create an announcement to welcome students to your online Blackboard course site. The Announcements area is the first thing students see when they enter your course. Also, the subject line of your announcement will appear in the "Announcements" module on the My UC page. This can be a great mechanism for getting your students' attention or letting them know important information.

When you added your syllabus, you uploaded a document that had already been created. In this case, you will be creating the announcement from within Blackboard.

Add an announcement

To add an announcement:

- Click the **"Announcements"** link in the Content Areas section of the Control Panel.

- Click the **"Add Announcement"** button.

- Give your announcement a **Subject** and type in the **text** of your message.

- Click the **"Yes"** radio button if you want your announcement to stay on the page permanently **or** leave the **"No"** default checked to allow this announcement to show on the My UC page for 7 days.

- Browse to the bottom of the screen and click **"Submit"** to save your changes.

The announcement will now appear on the first page that students see when they enter your Blackboard course.

Make Your Course "Available"

Now that you have uploaded your syllabus and added an announcement, it is time to make your Blackboard course visible to students, so that it will appear in their "My Courses" module when they log in.

Make your course Available

To make your course Available:

- Click the **"Settings"** link in Course Options area of the Control Panel.

- Click "**Course Availability"** in the next menu.

- Choose **"Yes"** to make your course visible to students.

- Scroll to the bottom of the screen and click **"Submit"** to save your changes.

Send Email to the Class

Now that you have added material to your course, it's time to let your students know the material is there! Sending an email out to your class couldn't be easier.

Send Email

To send an email to your entire class:

- From the Course Tools area of the Control Panel, click "**Send E-mail**."

- Choose "**All Users."**

- **Compose your email** telling students to log in to view their course material. **(Note: Students must activate their Blackboard account with a valid email address before they can receive email through Blackboard.)**

- Check **"Send Copy of Message to Self"** to maintain a record of the communication you sent and then click **"Submit."**

Setup a Discussion Board

Create a Discussion Board forum

The next step is to create a Discussion Board forum asking students to introduce themselves. Before students can post in the Discussion Board, instructors must create a "forum" or topic that students can write about.

To set up the Discussion Board, follow these steps:

- From the Course Tools area of the Control Panel, click "**Discussion Boards."**

- Click the "**Add Forum"** button in the upper left corner.

- **Create a name** for the forum (e.g., Introduce Yourself) and **add a brief description** paragraph in the text box below.

- Select the settings you wish to use for the Discussion Board. We recommend that instructors **de-select the "Allow Anonymous Posts"** option.

- Click **"Submit"** to save your changes to Blackboard.

You will now see a gray box with a link titled "Introduce Yourself." Users click on the link to enter that forum (or topic). Instructors or students can then click the "Add New Thread" button in the upper left corner of the screen to make a post on that topic. Go ahead and make the first post!

Add a TA to the Course

The last step in creating your basic course is to add co-instructors or teaching assistants (TAs) to help you with the maintenance of your Blackboard site. Remember, you should not enroll any student who is officially registered for your course – they should be enrolled with the automatic enrollment process. The only time you should need to "Add Users" is when adding a co-instructor or TA.

Add a user to your course

> **To add someone to your course:**
>
> - From the User Management area in the Control Panel, click the "**Enroll User"** link.
>
> - **Search** for the person's last name, then scroll through the results until you find the user you wish to add.
>
> - Click the checkbox next to their name and click **"Submit"** to save your changes.

Now that you have added the user, you may want to upgrade the user's privileges to access the Control Panel (or selected functions in the Control Panel).

Upgrade a user's privileges

> **To change a user's privileges:**
>
> - From the User Management area in the Control Panel, choose "**List/Modify User"**.
>
> - Search for the user's last name, then click the **"Properties"** button to the far right of the user's name.
>
> - **Choose from the available User Roles** to give this user additional access to your course:
>
>   o "Instructor" or "Teaching Assistant" will give that user full access to the Control Panel and all of its functions for this course.
>
>   o "Course Builder" or "Grader" will give this user access to several functions in the Control Panel to perform building or grading tasks.
>
>   o A "Guest" will only have access to certain content areas within the course, but none of the communication tools, and no access to the Control Panel.

This is the end of the basic course building section. You have added your syllabus to Blackboard, created a welcome announcement, made the course visible to students, used some of Blackboard's communication tools, and added a user to your course. You are well on your way to becoming a Blackboard expert!

In the next chapters we will:

- Discuss the Communications features in depth.

- Learn how to set up online Assessments and use the Gradebook function.

- Explore advanced course building techniques.

Chapter

4

Communication Tools

One of Blackboard's most valuable features is that it allows communication between students and faculty in a variety of formats.

With the built-in Communication Tools in Blackboard, instructors and students have a number of communication options that can expand the traditional classroom dialogue in a variety of ways. Online office hours, collaboration with fellow students on shared electronic media, project discussions using Discussion Boards – all of these things are possible with Blackboard. Each area discussed in this chapter is located in the Course Tools section of the Control Panel.

Course Tools Section
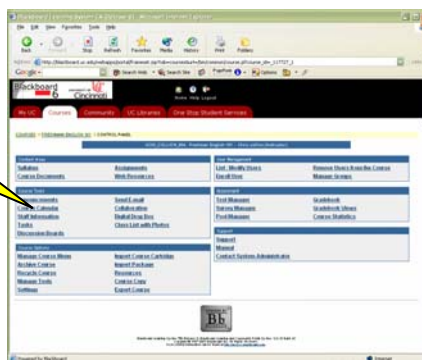
Send Email

Sending email in Blackboard is very easy to do. You do not need to know the email addresses of your students to contact them. Instead, you can specify your recipients by name, write your email, and then send it in one simple form.

In the previous chapter you sent an introductory email to the entire class list. In addition to sending messages to all members of the class, instructors also have other options. From the Course Tools area of the Control Panel, click "Send E-mail" and then choose from the options available.

The choices used most frequently are:

- **All Users** - Sends an email message to all of the users in the course.

- **Single/Select Users** - Select specific users to whom you wish to send an email message.

- **Single / Select Groups** – Email a specific group of students in the course.

In addition to choosing various recipients, you can also have a copy of the message sent to yourself, and/or add attachments to your email. This Send Email function is conveniently located in the Course Tools area of the Control Panel for faculty use.

Discussion Board

We have already created a Discussion Board forum in the previous chapter, but there are some more advanced features of the Discussion Board that instructors should know about.

Enter the Discussion Board by clicking on the appropriate link in the Course Tools area of the Control Panel, and then click on the "Introduce Yourself" forum that we created in Chapter 3. Click the "Show Options" tab in the upper right corner of the Discussion Board screen, and you should see a row of buttons appear above the messages. These buttons allow you to better manage messages in the forum, particularly when your list of posts becomes very lengthy.
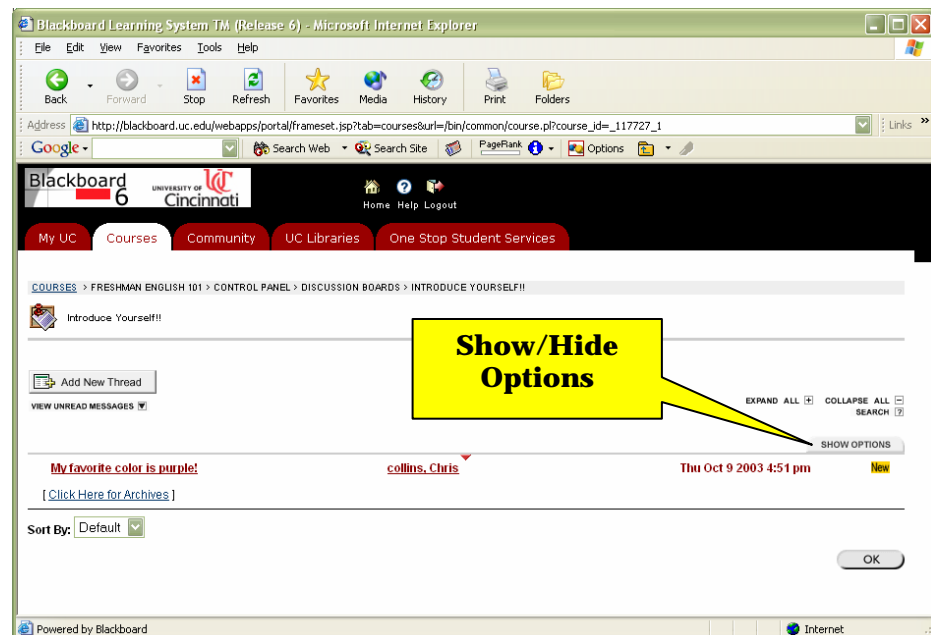
To read a message posted by a student, click on the subject of the message in the left hand column. The message will appear in the next screen with the student's name. The date and time the message was posted is automatically appended to the message. Students are unable to edit this information in the header of their message. To reply to that particular post, simply click the "Reply" button in the bottom right corner of the message screen.

If there are multiple posts in a Discussion Board Forum, you may want to read all of the messages in a single glance or print them out for offline reading.

Read multiple posts in a single screen

To collect posts into a single screen:

- Either click the **"Select All"** button from the Options menu or select specific messages by checking the box to the left of subject.

- Click the **"Collect"** button to view the selected messages on a single screen.

- Click **"Print"** in your Browser to print the messages to paper.

Collaboration

The Collaboration tool provides instructors with two different options: Lightweight Chat and Virtual Classroom. The Lightweight Chat is a text-based tool that gives you the ability to send private messages, view user information, create breakout sessions, and set archiving controls. The Virtual Classroom has all the features of the Lightweight Chat but also provides a Classroom Tool Box.
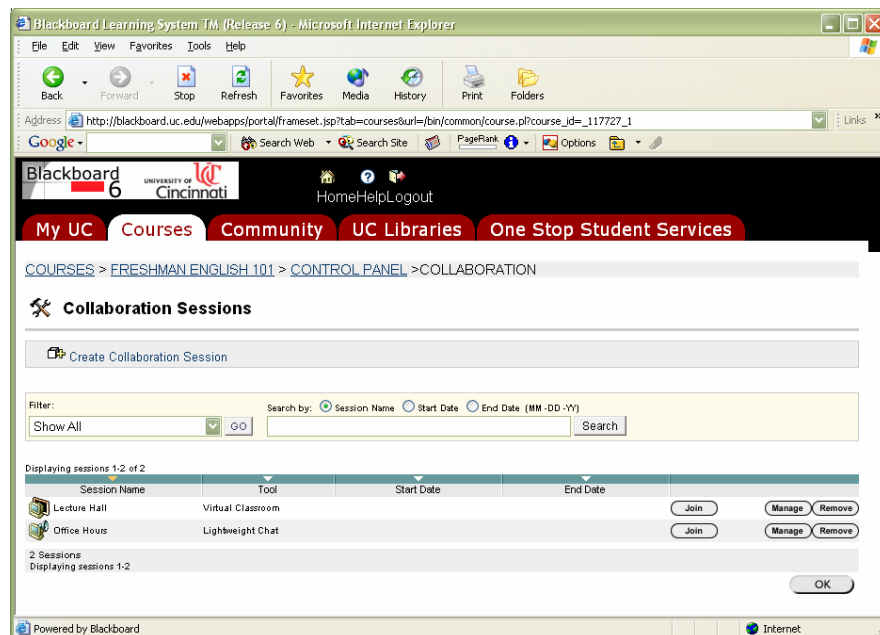
By default, each course is created with two default Collaboration sessions: Lecture Hall (virtual classroom) and Office Hours (lightweight chat). Instructors can begin by modifying either of these sessions or creating a new session. Notice that the two default sessions do not have a start or end date. However, instructors can create sessions with timed availability and the dates will appear on this screen.

How to create a new Collaboration Session

To create a new session:

- From the course Control Panel, select **"Collaboration"** under Course Tools.

- Click on **"Create Collaboration Session"** in the upper left corner.

- Under Item 1, **provide a name** for your session (Test Chat 1).

- Under Item 2, **select the dates** that your session will be held. (If you do not choose a date, your session will be ongoing.)

- Click the **"Yes"** radio button to make the session available.

- Under Item 3, **choose the tool** that you wish to use for your session (Lightweight Chat or Virtual Classroom).

- Then click the **"Submit"** button.

You will now see the information displayed for all your sessions: Session Name, Tool, Start Date, End Date. You will also see tool buttons to the far right of each session name: Join, Manage or Remove. The "Join" button will only be visible for those sessions (rooms) that are currently available (open) for discussions. To change the settings for one of your sessions, just click on the "Manage" button.

Lightweight Chat

In the Lightweight Chat, participants can join the session and see conversations that have taken place prior to joining the session (unless the instructor, or moderator, clears the display).
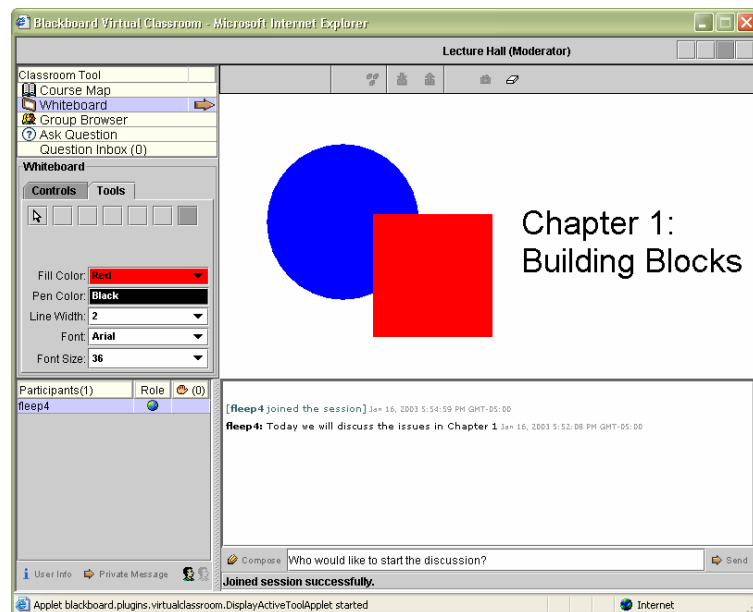

To join the Lightweight Chat session:

- Click on the **"Join"** button for the Office Hours session. Participant information will be listed on the left panel and conversations will be listed on the right panel.

- To participate in the dialogue, **type your information** in the Compose dialogue box on the bottom right and then click the **"Send"** button.

- To send a private message to a participant, highlight his/her name in the participant panel and then click on the **Private Message** button. A new screen will appear for you to type and send your message.

Virtual Classroom

The Virtual Classroom facilitates real time discussion and lessons. In the Virtual Classroom, the Tool Box panel on the left provides several features:

1. **Course Map:** to view course contents while in the session

2. **Whiteboard:** includes a Tools Palette to present information by drawing or text

3. **Group Browser:** to browse the web while in the session

4. **Ask Question:** visible only to users that have permission to ask questions

5. **Question Inbox:** to manage and respond to questions

To join the Virtual Classroom session:

- Click on the **"Join"** button for the Lecture Hall Virtual Classroom that has been created for your course. Participant information will be listed on the left panel and conversations will be listed on the right panel.

- To participate in the dialogue, **type your information** in the Compose dialogue box on the bottom right and then click the **"Send"** button.

- To send a private message to a participant, highlight his/her name in the participant panel and then click on the **Private Message** button. A new screen will appear for you to type and send your message.

- Instructors can control user access and assign roles by selecting a user name in the **Participant List** in the bottom left panel. By default, all users have active roles.

Archiving Collaboration Sessions

Archiving is not an automatic process in the new Collaboration tools. For Lightweight Chat or Virtual Classroom, instructors must specify where to begin and end archiving information. This is done by clicking on the buttons in the upper right corner of the session page. Instructors can also add bookmarks to the archive session.

Please note that, in order for any archive sessions for either tool to be visible to participants, the moderator (instructor) must change the archive settings to "available."

To make an archive available:

- Click on the **"Archives"** button to the right of the Session Name.

- At the next screen, click on the **"Manage"** button to the right of the Archive Name.

- Under Item 2, click the radio button **"Yes"** to make the archive available to students and then click the **"Submit"** button.

Digital Drop Box

What does the Drop Box do?

The Digital Drop Box is a tool that allows instructors and students to exchange files. Files in the Digital Drop Box can only be exchanged between an individual student and the instructor. Files are uploaded and stored on the course website for easy access. Storing documents in the Digital Drop Box in a Blackboard course is particularly

helpful in reducing the problems that are encountered with exceeding disk quotas on email accounts.

While students can access the Digital Drop Box from the Student Tools button, instructors must **always** access the Digital Drop Box through the course Control Panel.
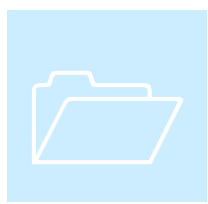
> Blackboard 6 introduced a new feature called the **Assignment Manager** to allow easier management of large files submitted as homework assignments. If you expect to have students submitting assignments to you through Blackboard, be sure to read **Creating an Assignment on page 38.**

Adding files

To add a document to the Digital Drop Box:

- In the Course Tools area of the Control Panel, click **"Digital Drop Box."**

- Click the **"Add File"** button.

- Under section 1, **enter the information** requested.

- Click on the **"Browse"** button at the end of the dialog box for File:

- **Locate the file** that you want to upload and click the **"Open"** button.

- Click the **"Submit"** button and the file will be uploaded to the Digital Drop Box.

- You will receive a message stating, "This file will be added but NOT sent. In order to send the file, please use the Send File button." Click on the **"OK"** button.

You will now see that the document has been added to your Digital Drop Box.. The confirmation message under your file name will read "Posted on.." and it will include the date and time your file was added.

Instructors can use Send File to simultaneously "Add" and "Send" a file to one or many students. The sent file will appear in each student's Digital Drop Box. In the following screen-shot, notice the window that appears when you click the Browse button.

This window is where you must locate the file you wish to add or send in the Digital Drop Box.
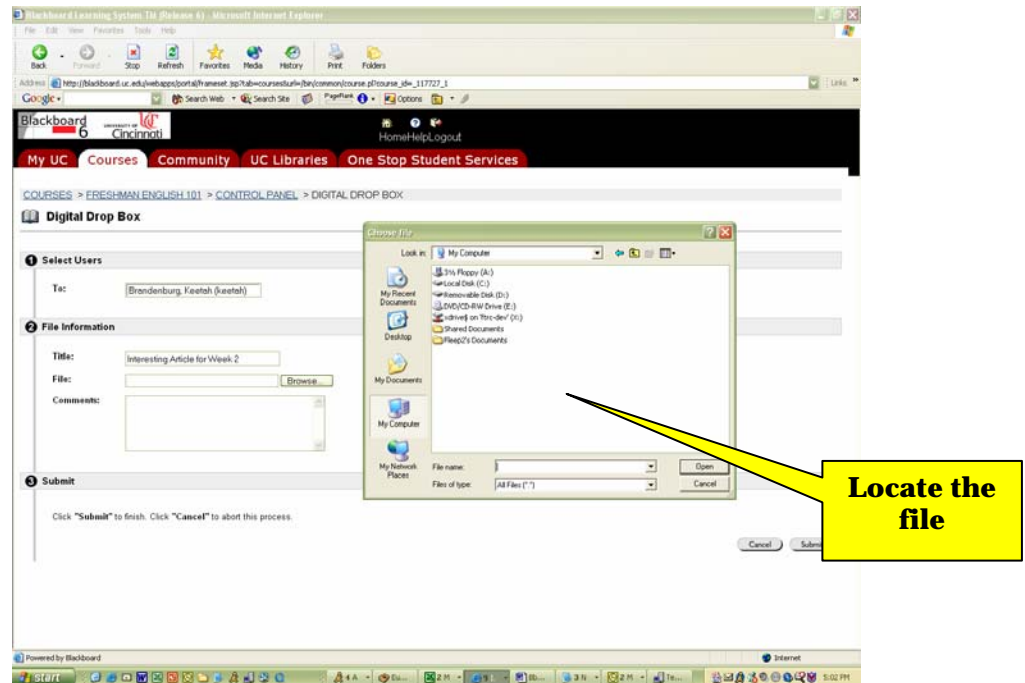
Sending files

To send a file:

- From the Course Tools area of the Control Panel, click **"Digital Drop Box."**

- Click the **"Send File"** button.

- Under section 1, **Select Users,** highlight the users you wish to receive the file (use the ctrl or shift keys to make multiple selections).

- Under section 2, **File Information,** choose one of the two options:

    - **Select Fil**e: Allows you to choose a file that has already been uploaded to your Digital Drop Box. Click on the down arrow to make your file selection.

    - **OR upload a new file:** Allows you to select a new file using the same process as adding a file above.

- After you have made your selection, click the **"Submit"** button to send the file.

Note: The "Comments" text box pertains ONLY to uploading a new file. If you select a file that has already been uploaded to the Digital Drop Box and you type comments in the text box, the comments will NOT be sent with the file.

After the file has been sent, it will be listed in your Digital Drop Box with the date and time the file was submitted.

You may encounter situations where your students say they submitted a file to you, but you never received it. Chances are, the student thought they did submit the file. But, when you "Add" files to the Digital Drop Box it becomes a **two-step process** to send it to the instructor. Many first-time users don't realize this and only partially complete the process. If students "Add" a file to their Drop Box, then they must next choose "Send File" to actually send the file to the instructor. We recommend that you teach your students how to use the "Send File" button before an assignment deadline approaches.

Limitations of the Drop Box

All files in the Digital Drop Box are listed in chronological order. Instructors do not have the ability to sort or organize these files, so when you have a large number of files in the Drop Box, this can make it difficult to manage. If instructors elect to remove a student file from their Drop Box, the documentation for that file in the student's Drop Box will be modified – instead of saying "submitted on" it will change to "received on" and show the date that the instructor deleted their file. For this reason, we recommend that instructors notify students before removing files so they have the ability to print whatever documentation they need from their Digital Drop Box prior to the file being removed.

It is not possible to open a file within the Digital Drop Box and directly modify that document. You must save the file to your hard drive to make modifications.

After you have made the modifications, **make sure to save the file under a new name** that will identify the student and that the file has been modified. If you save the file with the same name, you won't be able to tell the original file from the corrected file. Using a descriptive name will also help identify which file needs to be sent back to which student.

Remember, if you have 30 students in your class, you could receive 30 files in your Digital Drop Box that have the same name for an assignment or project. We recommend that you instruct your students to submit all documents in a format that identifies the student **and** the assignment.

For example:

- username_assign1.doc (the first assignment submitted by the student)

- username_assign1_graded.doc (the graded assignment returned by the instructor)

Note: Instructors who use the "Course Recycler" to remove all files from the Digital Dropbox will also delete files that students have added to their own personal Dropboxes in that course. Instructors who want to use the Course Recycler feature MUST inform their students before doing so, to protect students from losing files they may be storing in that course's Digital Dropbox.

Chapter

5

Assessments, Gradebook, & Assignments

This chapter describes how to create and administer online assessments, how to use the gradebook function, and how to create assignments that students can submit to you online.

T he ability to create and administer online tests provides instructors and students with a very useful tool, particularly for self-evaluation. Instructors can even give complete exams online. Before attempting to do this, you should understand the limitations of this method of testing.

First, you should be aware that information from any web page, including exams and assessments, can be copied and pasted into other applications, such as email or word processors. The best way to prevent students from copying material from the assessment is to not make the exam available until the designated exam time.

In addition, the assessment module in Blackboard requires that the student's computer has constant connectivity to the server. If a student loses network connectivity or if their computer freezes or crashes in the middle of an exam, then the failed attempt must be cleared by the instructor before the student can retake the exam. If this occurs, the student will lose any answers already entered into the assessment screen.

Finally, instructors can correct only the text of questions if an exam is "Available" to students for test taking. Once a student has taken the test, it is not possible to change point values, add or remove questions, or make other substantial changes to the test. Instructors may give individual students extra credit points for individual questions, however. This is detailed in the **Gradebook** section of this chapter.

Instructors who are interested in using only the gradebook function in Blackboard (but not the testing function) may wish to skip ahead to the **Using the Gradebook** section in this chapter, located on page 34. Information about how to **Create an Assignment** begins on page 38.

The Pool and Test creation and Gradebook areas discussed in this chapter are located in the Assessment section of the Control Panel. Tests are deployed and Assignments are created in the Content section of the Control Panel.


Creating Question Pools

Though instructors can build a simple exam by creating questions directly in the Test Manager, we recommend that instructors create their questions in the Pool Manager. Question pools can be shared with colleagues, exported and imported into other courses, and copied into future courses.

Add a pool

To begin, enter the Pool Manager from the Control Panel for the course. Then click the "Add Pool" button in the upper left corner of the screen. You will be prompted to enter the information in the "Pool Info" screen. Enter a name, description, and instructions for your pool. Note the options for placing HTML or mathematical symbols and equations within your description and/or instruction area.
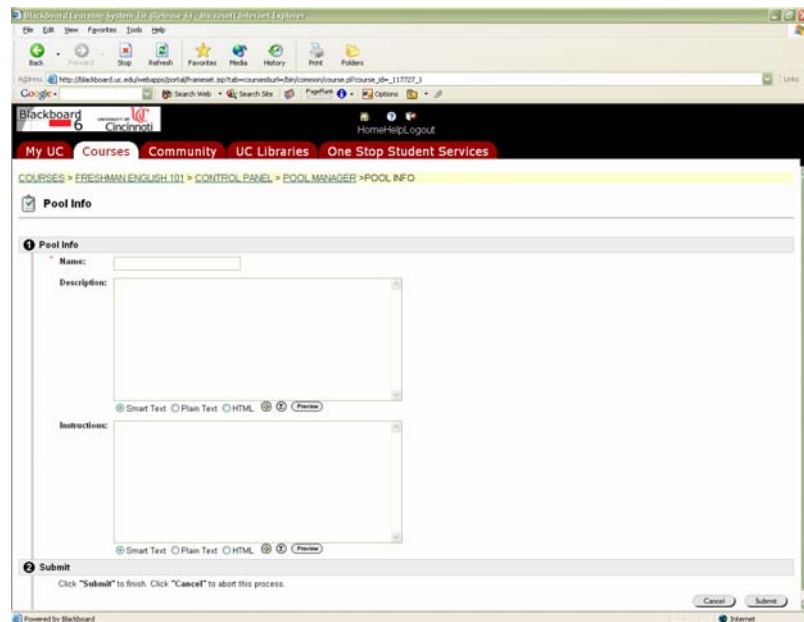
Add description and directions

You may add mathematical symbols by clicking on the "Insert Equation" or "InsertMathML" icons, located at the bottom of the text fields. A new window will open with a variety of mathematical symbols and functions. Move the cursor over the buttons at the top of the screen and click once to see all of the options for that function. Click on the desired function and then edit the equation in the text box. When finished, click the "Add" button at the bottom of the window. Click "Submit" when finished.

In the next screen, a pull down menu lists the types of questions that may be added to the pool. Listed are various question format types and options to import questions from other pools, assessments, or archived files.
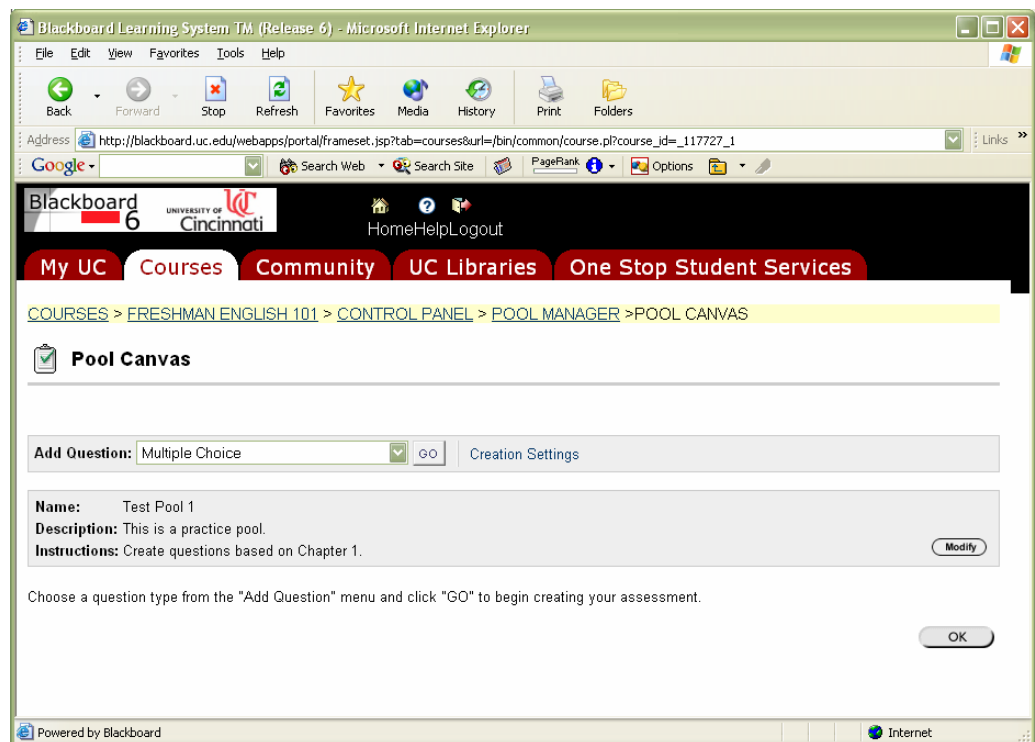
Add multimedia content to questions

Notice the "Creation Settings" button to the right of the pull down menu. Advanced users may want to add images, files, and URLs to questions and answers in the pool. The Creation Settings screen allows instructors to set up the question pool in such a way that multimedia files can be added to questions and answers. Instructors are encouraged to explore this option when they are comfortable with the basic Pool and Test functions.

Add questions to the pool

> **To create questions in the pool:**
>
> - **Choose a question type** and click the **"GO"** button.
>
> - The following screens provide spaces to **enter your question text, answer choices, and optional feedback** for correct or incorrect responses.
>
> - Click **"Submit"** at the bottom of the screen to add the question to the pool.
>
> - Add as many questions as you like by choosing the question type and clicking the **"GO"** button.
>
> - Click **"OK"** from the Pool Canvas screen to finish creating the pool.

Below you will find each question type listed, and things to keep in mind as you create your questions and answers.

Question format options

Multiple Choice:

- Unlike the Multiple Answer questions, students can only choose ONE correct answer.

- Enter the question into the text box and provide the possible answer choices in the appropriate space. Then identify the correct answer by clicking the radio button to the right of that answer.

True/False:

- True/False questions are simple – they're either True or False.

Multiple Answer:

- Multiple Answer questions allow the student to choose more than one correct answer – **but they must choose ALL of the correct answers to get credit** for the question. Blackboard does NOT award partial credit for choosing only some of the right answers. You can go back to the gradebook and give students partial credit, but you will have to do this manually for each student.

- Enter all of the choices available in the appropriate spaces, and then indicate which answers are correct by clicking the check box to the left of the entry.

Ordering:

- As the name indicates, student must place the various items in the correct order. In this case, students DO get partial credit for placing some items in the correct order – they do not have to order all items correctly to get any credit for the question.

- Like the Matching question type, creating an Ordering question is a two step process. First, you must provide the question text and then enter the items IN THE CORRECT ORDER.

- At the next screen, use the pull-down menus to place the items in the order in which you want them to appear on the exam (i.e. the WRONG order).

Matching:

- At the first screen, enter your question into the space provided and then enter the question items and their matching answers OUT OF ORDER.

Question format options continued

- At the next screen, provide the answer key with the correct matches. If you entered the matching answers in the correct order, click the "Cancel" button and go back to the first screen to mix up your answers.

- Students DO receive partial credit for the question if they do not match all correct answers to the items.

Fill in the Blank:

- When creating a "FIB" question, you should actually type the blank into the question. For example, "The name of this university is _____."

- When entering the Answer Values for this type of question, you want to be explicit about the answers you will allow. For example, in the previous question, several answers would be correct – "UC", "University of Cincinnati", "Univ of Cinti", etc. You must type every spelling/combination of words you will allow to have the exam graded accurately. You can allow up to 20 correct answers.

- The answers are not case sensitive, so both "UC" and "uc" would be counted as correct, even if you only entered "UC" as a correct item. You may always go back in and give a student credit if s/he provides an answer not on your answer key, but to have the exam graded automatically, it is preferable to anticipate as many potential answers as you can.

Short Answer/Essay:

- Short Answer/Essay questions cannot automatically be graded by Blackboard, though you can enter a general answer in the space provided to help guide a TA or assistant if someone else will be doing the grading.

- Short Answer/Essay questions must be graded by going into the "Online Gradebook" from the Control Panel. From there, click on the red exclamation point where that student's score should be, and enter the number of points awarded in the appropriate space for that question.

Creating Online Tests & Surveys

Instructors can choose to create tests or surveys. Surveys do not have "correct" answers and survey questions are not assigned point values, but in other respects, surveys and tests are created and administered in the same way. Though instructors can create tests and surveys directly in the "Test Manager" or "Survey Manager," in this section we will pull the questions created in the Pool Manager into a new assessment.

Create a test from a pool

To create a test using questions from a pool:

- From the Control Panel, enter the **"Test Manager."**

- Click the **"Add Test"** button in the upper left corner.

- Enter the appropriate information in the **"Test Info"** screen, click **"Submit."**

- In the next screen, click the **"Creation Settings"** button, check the box and specify the default point value for each question, then click **"Submit."**

- You are returned to the "Test Canvas" screen. Select **"From a Question Pool or Assessment"** from the pull down menu and then click the **"GO"** button.

- In the next screen, **select the pool** created in the previous section and **choose ALL question types**, then click the **"Search"** button.

- In the following screen, select **specific questions** and then click **"Submit."**

You should now see a list of all of the questions from the pool that you selected. This screen will display the questions, correct answers, and point value for each question.

Notice the "Modify" and "Remove" buttons to the right of each question. You may change the point value or modify any question by clicking its "Modify" button. The "Remove" button will delete the question from the test. You may also insert questions by clicking the "Add Question Here" link in the appropriate place. Finally, the questions can be re-ordered by using the pull-down menu to the left of each question entry (on the gray line).

If no further changes need to be made, click the "OK" button at the bottom of the screen to return to the Test Manager and then "OK" again to return to the Control Panel.

Deploying the Exam

Though you have created the pool questions and they have been assembled into a test in the last section, the test itself does not yet appear anywhere in the course for students to take it. At this point, you must decide where the test should be placed in

the course. Choose one of the Content Areas (Course Documents, for example) and click on that link in the Control Panel.
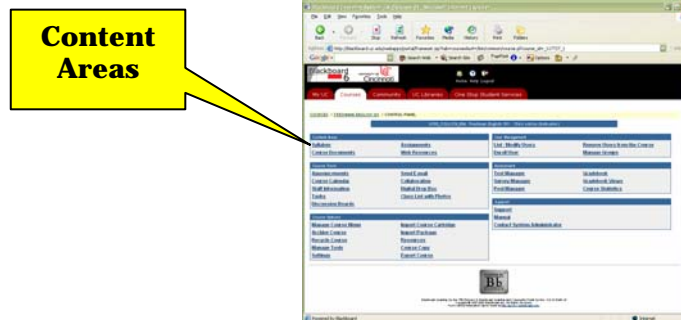
In the upper left corner of the screen are various buttons that allow you to add content to this area of the course. Click the "Test" button to add the test you created.
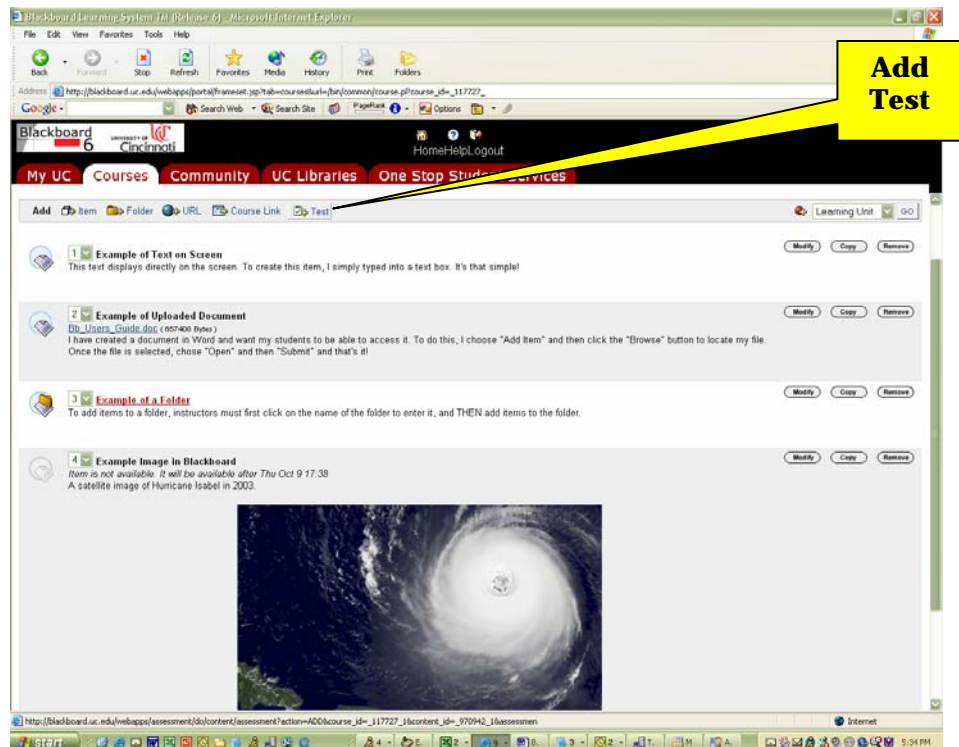
In the following screen, click the test you created from the "Select an existing test" menu and then click "Submit." You should receive a message that the test was successfully added to the content area of the course; click "OK" to acknowledge the receipt.

Finally, you must modify the test options to make the test visible to students, enable feedback, password protect the test, or use any of the other options. Click the "Modify the test options" link to make your choices in the next screen.

We recommend that instructors password protect the test to prevent unauthorized access and then only give students the password immediately before the test. We also recommend that instructors **do** select the "randomize questions" option in the Test Presentation (section 4) area of the screen. This will ensure that each student receives the same questions, but all in a different order to prevent cheating. Once you have selected all of the options you wish to use, click "Submit" to make the exam visible in the class and available for test taking.

We recommend that instructors **do not** use the "Display After" and "Display Until" date options in the Test Availability (section 2) area of the screen. If a student who missed the test needs to take a make-up test, you would have to reset the dates of availability – possibly many times. It is much easier to simply change the password on the exam to make it inaccessible to students before or after the test date.

To make a test visible to students

To recap the steps to make a test visible in your Blackboard course:

- From the Content Areas section of the Control Panel, **choose where you want the test to display** in your course (for example, Course Documents) and **click the appropriate link**.

- Click the **"Add Test"** button in the upper left corner of the screen.

- Select the desired test from the **"Select an existing test"** menu and then click **"Submit."**

- Click **"OK"** at the "Test successfully added" screen.

- Click the **"Modify the test options"** link to set the options.

- Choose the options you wish to use. Make sure you **"make the link visible"** in section 2 on this screen, otherwise students will be unable to take the exam.

- Click **"Submit"** when all of the desired options are chosen.

- Click **"OK"** at the bottom right of the screen several times to return to the Control Panel.

Students may begin taking the exam as soon as the link is made visible in the course. As they take the test, their scores will appear in the Blackboard Gradebook. If a student's test-taking session is interrupted during the exam, he or she may be locked out of the test before completing it. If this occurs, you will need to "reset the attempt" to allow the student to retake the test. This procedure is described in detail in the next section of this chapter.

Using the Gradebook

Grades generated from online tests are posted to the Gradebook automatically. Instructors can also manually enter columns into the Gradebook to track scores on in-class assignments such as homework assignments, in-class quizzes, or essays. Students can check their grades from the Student Tools button in the course, or from the Check Grades link on the My UC page.
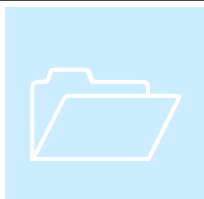
Instructors should **<u>always</u>** keep a back-up copy of their Gradebook on their personal computers. The Blackboard system is backed up nightly, but the back-ups are available only in the event of system-wide failure – **not** for individual cases of data loss. Look for directions to save your Gradebook later in this section.

View the online gradebook

To view the online Gradebook, click the "Gradebook" link from the Assessment section of the Control Panel. The Gradebook is set up like a spreadsheet – each student has a row, each item in the gradebook has a column.

In the screenshot above, John and Xena have already taken the Blackboard Basics test, and the lock in Mary's row shows that the test is in-progress at that time. Instructors can view each student's answers to the test questions by clicking on the numerical score in the proper column, and then clicking the "View" button in the next screen. You can also change points awarded for each question in that screen.

If a student is locked out of an online exam before they finish taking the test, the instructor will have to reset the test by "clearing the attempt" in the gradebook.

How to allow a student to retake a test

To allow a student to retake a test:

- **Click the lock symbol or the numerical score** in the appropriate column.

- In the following screen, click the **"View"** button to the far right of the table.

- Next, click the **"Clear Attempt"** button to reset the test.

Instructors also can add columns in the gradebook to record scores for in-class assignments.

Add items to the gradebook

> **To add items to the gradebook:**
>
> - In the upper right corner, click the **"Add Item"** button.
>
> - **Fill out the requested information**, click **"Submit"** when finished.
>
> - Click **"OK"** to acknowledge receipt and return to the Gradebook.

Now a new column will appear in the Gradebook. To add students' scores, click on the name of the item at the top of the column, choose "Item Grade List", and then enter scores in the spaces provided.

Finally, you should also know how to download your grades into a file that you can then save on your own computer and then open in MS Excel.

Save a copy of your gradebook

> **To save a copy of your gradebook:**
>
> - Click the **"Download Grades"** button from the Gradebook.
>
> - Read the directions on the screen, click the **"Download"** button.
>
> - **Save the file to your computer.** Open the file in Excel.

Create an Assignment

The Assignment Manager in Blackboard allows you to create assignment entries in the content areas of the course, which then automatically create entries in the online Gradebook. Students can submit their homework assignments to you through this assignment feature and you can download and grade multiple assignments from students all at one time!

Create a new assignment

The first step in using the Assignment Manager is to create the assignment in one of the Content areas of your course. We suggest the default Assignments button.

To create a new assignment:

- Click the **"Assignments"** link in the Content Areas section of the Control Panel.

- Use the pull down menu in the upper far right corner to select "**Assignment**" and then click the **"Go"** button.

- **Create a name** for the assignment (e.g., Homework #1), **assign a total point value,** and **enter the instructions** in the text box below.

- If your instructions are already typed in a document, you can attach that file by clicking the **"Browse"** button in Section 3.

- Click **"Submit"** to save your changes to Blackboard.

The student view of an assignment allows them to add comments to a text box before they attach the file they wish to upload to the instructor.

View the submitted assignments

After students have submitted their files, you can go into the online Gradebook to check their progress and download files for grading.

> **To view a submitted assignment:**
>
> - Click the **"Gradebook"** link from the Assessment section of the Control Panel.
>
> - **Find the column** with the same title as your homework assignment. Students who have an **"!"** in their row have submitted something for review.
>
> - Click on the **"!"** and then click **"View"** to view the assignment.

The next screen allows you to clear the student's attempt, open or save the document submitted by the student, assign a grade, and provide feedback to the student. Instructors often grade the submitted paper and then attach the graded file to be returned to the student.

You can also add notes for your own use in the Instructor Notes section of the screen. This method works well for viewing individual students' work and provides the student with feedback as soon as you enter it into Blackboard.

But what if you have a very large class and want to easily manage large numbers of files? It would be very time consuming to individually view each student's assignment in a large class, so Blackboard allows you to manage and download all the files from a single assignment in one screen.

Download multiple assignments

Blackboard 6   UNIVERSITY OF Cincinnati   Home Help Logout

My UC | Courses | Community | UC Libraries | One Stop Student Services

COURSES > CHRIS C'S BB6 TEST COURSE 1 > CONTROL PANEL > GRADEBOOK > ITEM OPTIONS > DOWNLOAD ASSIGNMENT: HOMEWORK #1

📖 Download Assignment: Homework #1

❶ Select Students

Check All | Check Ungraded | Uncheck All

	Student Name	Date	Grade
☑	Doe, John	2004-09-09 11:45:14.0	Needs Grading
☑	Zork, Xena	2004-09-09 11:45:43.0	Needs Grading
☑	Jones, Mary	2004-09-09 11:44:45.0	Needs Grading
	Brandenburg, Cate		N/A
	Frost, Lara		N/A
	Crawford, Carl		N/A
	Davis, Dave		N/A
	Anderson, Alf		N/A

❷ Submit

Click "**Submit**" to finish. Click "**Cancel**" to abort this process.

Cancel   Submit

To download all completed assignments:

- Click the **"Gradebook"** link from the Assessment section of the Control Panel.

- **Find the column** with the same title as your homework assignment. **Click the assignment name** – it is a live link.

- Click the **"Item Download"** menu item.

- **Check individual assignments** or use the **"Check All"** link to select files for download and click **"Submit"** to save your choices.

- In the next screen, click the **"Download assignments now"** link and **choose the "Save" button** in the window that pops up. This will download the selected files to your computer.

This feature is a great improvement over the Digital Dropbox and provides much more flexibility for managing large numbers of submitted files.

Chapter

6

Advanced Course Building

In this section, you will learn advanced course building techniques to take your course to the next level!

Blackboard is designed to be very versatile. This flexibility allows instructors to move beyond the basic course building techniques described in earlier chapters, to design enhanced, multimedia rich course sites.

Manage Course Menu

Instructors have the option to change the names and number of buttons that appear in the student view of a Blackboard course site. Instructors can rename buttons to apply to specific course materials, and they can add or remove as many buttons as they wish.

Edit or manage the Course Menu

> **To edit the Course Menu:**
>
> - In the Course Options area of the Control Panel, click **"Manage Course Menu."**
>
> - In the next screen, you can **"Modify"** existing buttons **or,**
>
> - **"Add"** new areas: Content, Tools, Course Links, or External Links

Instructors can rename buttons or control who has access to a specific area of the course by clicking the "Modify" button to the right of a button name. For example, an instructor may wish to make her course available for Guest Access, but would like for only enrolled students to access the "Course Documents" button of the course. She would click on the "Manage Course Menu" link in the Control Panel and then click the "Modify" button to the right of the "Course Documents" button. At the next screen, she would de-select "Allow guest access" and then guests would no longer be able to view that area of the course.

Instructors can also remove any buttons that they do not plan to use; however every course **must** have an "Announcements" button.

Groups

Instructors who assign project work to students in their class benefit from the Groups option that is available in Blackboard. Instructors have the ability to create separate groups with their own separate communication tools within their Blackboard course. Only those students enrolled in the group will have access to any of these group communication tools (Discussion Board, File Exchange, Virtual Classroom, Send Email). NOTE: Enrolled students can now belong to more than one group in the same course.

How to create Groups

To create a group in your Blackboard course:

- In the User Management area of the Control Panel, select **"Manage Groups."**

- Choose **"Add Group."**

- Fill in the **Main Group Information** requested in section 1.

- Under **Group Options** in section 2, choose which communication tools you wish to allow for this group and click the box in front of those options.

- Click the **"Yes"** radio button for "Make this group visible now" and then click the **"Submit"** button.

You will need to follow this procedure for each group that you wish to create in your Blackboard course.

Adding users to Groups

To add enrolled students to a group created in your course:

- In the User Management area of the Control Panel, select **"Manage Groups."**

- To the far right of the name of the group that you created, click on the **"Modify"** button.

- Choose **"Add Users To Group."**

- Click on the **"Search"** button and a list of all the enrolled students will appear.

- **Check the boxes** in front of the names of the students you wish to add to the group.

- Click the **"Submit"** button and your students will be added to the group.

**Limitations of
Groups**

Before a student can post a message to the group Discussion Board, a forum (topic) for the discussion must be created. Currently, students who are members of a Group within a Blackboard course are unable to create any forums for the group Discussion Board. Therefore, instructors will be required to create all forums for groups that have the Discussion Board option enabled. In the procedure in **Chapter 3**, you created a Discussion Board forum for the entire class. But to create a Forum for a Group, instructors must enter the Group from the student view and then create the forum in each Group Discussion Board.

Using PowerPoint in Blackboard

Presentations created in PowerPoint can have terrific visual impact for students in addition to providing an excellent outline of important course information. Many instructors are choosing to make their presentations available to students on Blackboard for further study.

Before instructors upload their PowerPoint presentations, they should also convert their PowerPoint files into HTML for maximum flexibility. See the list of Pros and Cons of each format below to understand why it is preferable to upload both file types for your students.

**Why instructors
should upload both
formats**

PowerPoint Files (.ppt)

Pros: Once the presentation is complete, instructors can upload it to Blackboard without doing any additional work. The standard printing options are preserved in the PowerPoint file, so students can print multiple slides per page for easy note taking (and less wasted paper).

Cons: To open a PowerPoint file, students must have a compatible version of PowerPoint installed on their own computer. PowerPoint files can be very large in size, which may require very long download times for students on slower internet connections. PowerPoint files must be completely and fully downloaded before students can even begin viewing the first slide.

HTML Files (.html)

Pros: A standard web browser is the only necessary requirement for students to view HTML files. To open a PowerPoint file requires the student to have a current version of PowerPoint installed. HTML files are much smaller in size than PowerPoint files, so students on slower internet connections can download the material faster. The HTML slides are downloaded one at a time, which means students can begin viewing slide one before slide two has finished downloading.

Cons: Converting PowerPoint files to HTML involves several steps, and then the HTML files must be compressed with WinZip. This process can be a bit confusing at

first (though we provide step-by-step instructions below). Students lose the option to print multiple slides per page.

> Instructors should upload two files, one a PowerPoint file and the other in HTML format, to provide students with the option that best suits their needs and technical capabilities.

Converting PPT Files to HTML

When a PowerPoint file is converted to HTML, the results is one "main" HTML file and many associated HTML files. All of these files must then be compressed ("zipped up") with a program called WinZip. This single .zip file is then uploaded to Blackboard. (Note: If you are creating a PowerPoint file from scratch, save the file as a .ppt file first and then follow the steps to convert to HTML.)

Convert PowerPoint files to HTML

To convert .ppt files to .html:

- Click the **"File"** menu on the toolbar at the top of the screen.

- Choose the **"Save as Web Page"** option.

- Click the **"New folder"** icon from the top menu, and create and name a folder to save the web pages of your presentation.

- Click **"Publish"** in the same Save As.. window. This opens a "Publish as Web Page" window.

- Click on **"All browsers listed above"** under the Browser Support Section in this window.

- Click **"Publish."**

Close PowerPoint and double click on the "My Computer" icon on your desktop to find where the HTML files were saved on your hard drive. Notice that there is one main file "NameOfPowerPointFile.html" and many related files. All the other files are linked to this main file.

Compressing & Uploading Files

The next step is to compress the converted files using a software package called WinZip. UC has a site license for WinZip, and you can download the full service product at http://www.ucit.uc.edu/computers/software/. Follow the directions to install WinZip on your computer.

Once you have installed WinZip on your computer, compress the HTML files you created before uploading them into Blackboard.

Compress the HTML files

Zip up the HTML files:

- From your desktop, **double click on the "My Computer" icon** and find the folder (directory) that contains the HTML files saved on your hard drive.

- **Right click** on the folder.

- Select **"Add to your_file_name.zip"** under the "Sharing…" section of the pop-up menu.

You have now compressed the files using the WinZip software and the "zip" file has been created in the same location as the directory where your HTML files were stored. The next step is to upload this compressed file into Blackboard.

Upload the compressed .zip file to Blackboard

Upload .zip file to Blackboard:

- In section 1 of the Control Panel, click the link where you wish to place the documents; for example, click **"Course Documents."**

- Click **"Add Item."**

- **Name the link** (this is what your students will click on).

- **Browse** for the Zipped file and select it.

- Next to the "Special Action" – **select "Unpackage this file."**

- Click **"Submit."**

- **Select the main .htm or .html file** for the entry point.

- Click **"Submit."**

Test in the student view by clicking on the "My UC" tab and re-entering your course site to make sure the presentation uploaded correctly.

Adding Multimedia Content

Multimedia files are added to a Blackboard course site as attachments. The files can either be displayed in the page or set up as linked files.

Adding multimedia files

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To add a multimedia file:

- From the Content Areas of the Control Panel, **choose where to place the material** (for example, Course Documents).

- Click **"Add Item."**

- **Give the item a name** in the appropriate text box..

- Scroll down to the second section of the Add Item page, and click the **"Browse"** button to locate your multimedia file.

- Select the file and click the **"Open"** button.

- Select the appropriate **"Special Action"** from the pull-down menu (see below).

- Click the **"Submit"** button.

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There are three choices in the "Special Action" pull down menu. **"Unpackage this file"** is used to un-package compressed files, which was discussed earlier in this chapter.

"Create a link to this file" uploads the file to the Blackboard server, as we saw in Chapter 3 when we added a course syllabus. Students simply click on the link to open the item. This is the suggested action for a media file type not supported by Blackboard, or for long lists of multimedia items in the same area of a course.

The **"Display media file within the page"** option displays directly on the webpage. For example, if you attach a .jpg photo in Course Documents and choose the second option in the pull down menu, students will see the photo as soon as they click on the Course Documents button.

Before choosing to display the media file in this manner, note that the Blackboard software allows only a few media formats to display within the browser page. Also note that students must have the correct software to display the file. For example, they must have the Windows Media Player to view .wmv files.

Supported multimedia formats

The multimedia formats supported by Blackboard are:

- **Image**: gif, jpg, jpeg and png.

- **Movie**: mpg, mpeg, mov, avi, wmv.

- **Sound**: wav, aiff, wma, au, mp3.

If **"Display a media file within page"** is selected as the Special Action, but the attached media file is not supported by Blackboard, then the software will automatically create a link to the file.

To view or operate other formats not supported within Blackboard, users must have the relevant plug-ins or application software on their computers. When the attachment is a media file that requires a plug-in or another application, select **"Create a link to the file,"** and provide instructions to the viewers about the software requirements for that file type.

From time to time, students cannot open a media file directly from a link, even with the required software installed on their system. In these cases, suggest that they download the file first and then open it from their computer. This troubleshooting tip solves most user problems with multimedia files.

Using Course Cartridges

Course Cartridges are supplemental material available from textbook publishers, that contain comprehensive course content to import into your Blackboard course. Content may include slides, documents, animated tutorials, quiz banks, lists of relevant links, and other learning materials. Cartridges can be an excellent starting point for instructors who are just beginning to develop online teaching strategies.

If you choose to use a course cartridge, your students will be able to access the cartridge material installed in your course. Some cartridges require a Student Access Key that comes bundled with the student's textbook purchase. Other publishers may provide the Student Access Key to the instructor for in-class distribution. Still other cartridges are "Open Access" and do not need any key-code or password at all. If a Student Access Key is required, students are prompted to enter the key through the "Course Documents" area of the Blackboard course. After this initial entry, they will have access to the material for the remainder of the academic quarter.

> To obtain a course cartridge, visit the Blackboard Course Cartridge catalog at http://cartridges.blackboard.com. You will find a listing of current cartridges available, a publisher contact list, and other pertinent information related to cartridges.

Once you have received an Instructor Download Key from your publisher, you will be able import the cartridge into your Blackboard course.

Installing Course Cartridges

To download a course cartridge:

- In section 3 of the Control Panel, click **"Import Course Cartridge."**

- In the text box, **enter the Instructor Download Key**.

- Click **"Submit"** when finished.

Upon installation of the cartridge, instructors should receive an email confirmation when the cartridge has finished downloading. Instructors are then free to customize the content by adding and deleting materials as needed to correlate with specific topics covered in the classroom.

If you experience any technical difficulties while importing the course cartridges or need additional assistance, please contact the Blackboard Support Team.

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