Faculty Guide to Blackboard

Table of Contents

Overview .................................................................................................................................................. 2
How Do I Log In to Blackboard? ........................................................................................................ 2
Online Blackboard Help ....................................................................................................................... 2
Blackboard and Email .......................................................................................................................... 3

Administration and Lifecycle of Blackboard Courses ........................................................................ 3
New Courses on Blackboard ................................................................................................................. 3
Enrollments .......................................................................................................................................... 4
Course Availability – Unavailable vs. Available ............................................................................... 4

Getting to Your Blackboard Course .................................................................................................... 4
Changing Your Blackboard Password ................................................................................................. 4
Basic Editing and Navigation Tools .................................................................................................... 5

Basic Course Tools .............................................................................................................................. 5
The Course Menu ................................................................................................................................ 5
The Control Panel – Your Access to Course Building Tools ............................................................... 6
Customizable Course Menu: Adding, Renaming, and Deleting Menu Items ..................................... 6
Adding an Announcement .................................................................................................................... 7
Communicating with Students: Email and Messages ......................................................................... 7
Uploading a Few Course Files ............................................................................................................. 8
Using Course Files to Add Content to your Blackboard Course ....................................................... 8
  Uploading Files (to Course Files) ......................................................................................................... 8
  Linking Course Files to Content Areas (so students can access them) ........................................... 9
  Managing Course Content (e.g., moving, copying) ........................................................................... 9

Other Tools for Building your Course .................................................................................................. 10
The Online Grade Center ...................................................................................................................... 11
  Viewing the Grade Center .................................................................................................................. 11
  Instructor View .................................................................................................................................. 12
  Student View .................................................................................................................................... 12
  Reading the Grade Center – The Icon Legend ............................................................................... 13
  Grade Center Basics .......................................................................................................................... 13
  Adding a Student (Row) .................................................................................................................... 13
  Create an Item (Column) .................................................................................................................... 13
  Weighting Grades ............................................................................................................................... 14
  Entering Grades ................................................................................................................................. 14
  Downloading Grades .......................................................................................................................... 14

Blackboard Best Practices & Tips .......................................................................................................... 15

Hardware and Software Specifications for Blackboard ......................................................................... 15
Supported Browsers & Operating Systems for Blackboard 9.1 ........................................................... 16

Getting Help with Technology at the University of Hartford ............................................................. 17
Overview

Blackboard is an online learning management system (LMS). It provides you with a ready-made online course that you can use to post course documents and communicate with students. Blackboard includes useful teaching tools such as discussion boards, blogs, and journals, and allows you to create and administer online tests and surveys. In an emergency (pandemic flu, flood), instructors should plan to use Blackboard to continue teaching.

Here are the steps for getting started using Blackboard.

1. Get a University email account through Information Technology Services, CC 113.
2. Contact FCLD for a Blackboard orientation session fcld@hartford.edu or (860)768-4661.
3. Login into Blackboard: http://blackboard.hartford.edu
4. Upon login, you should see your courses listed on your Blackboard Home Page in the My Courses box. Enter a course by clicking on it.
5. Check course roster against the one listed in Banner https://banweb8.hartford.edu/
6. Upload and organize your course files and folders in the central file storage area called Files.
7. Create links from course files to course content areas (e.g., Course Documents, Assignments).
8. Add any interactive assignments (blogs, wikis, etc.) or multimedia (e.g., YouTube).
9. Post a welcome announcement in your course.
10. Make sure your course is available to students.
11. Explain to students how to get help (Help button or the Computer Support line 768-5999).
12. If time allows, reserve time in a computer lab to take a tour of your course with your students.

How Do I Log In to Blackboard?

You must have a valid University of Hartford email account to log into Blackboard. If you don’t have one, visit Information Technology Services in the Computer Center building, CC113. You must present proof of affiliation with the university (i.e. contract of hire, class schedule, or University ID card) to be issued an email account. You should be able to log into Blackboard within 24-48 hours of applying for an email account.

To login:
- Go to http://blackboard.hartford.edu.
- In the login text box, type the first part of your University of Hartford email (jdoe if your email is jdoe@hartford.edu).
- Your Blackboard password is initially set to the last four digits of your University ID.
- Click Login. You will now see your Blackboard Homepage.

To log out, use the Logout button at the top of the screen.

Online Blackboard Help

Instructions are available from any screen in Blackboard for both you and your students. Select the Help icon at the top of the page next to the logout button to find a faculty link to support materials, including videos, quick guides, and the FCLD website.
You can also call FCLD at (860)768-4661 or email at fcld@hartford.edu.

Help is also available from any Control Panel in the Help area:

- **Contact System Administrator** – sends an e-mail to FCLD staff.
- **Guide** – accesses the Blackboard manual, which has very good step-by-step instructions.
- **On Demand** – accesses Blackboard’s On Demand Learning Center containing video tutorials and other written support documentation.
- **Blackboard’s Website**: [http://www.blackboard.com/Communities/Overview.aspx](http://www.blackboard.com/Communities/Overview.aspx)
- **Support** – Mostly help for FCLD staff, but there are some faculty resources here.

If FCLD is unavailable to help, a quick ‘Google’ search will help locate answers to common Blackboard questions from other University websites.

**Blackboard and Email**

Your email address in Blackboard is set to your University of Hartford email. Although you can send email from your Blackboard course, you need to read it using your regular email program (e.g., webmail, or the email program to which you forward your webmail). To access webmail, go to [http://webmail.hartford.edu](http://webmail.hartford.edu) and login using your email username and password. For information on forwarding your email to another address, go to [http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/www/qanda/19971001-2.HTML](http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/www/qanda/19971001-2.HTML).

**Administration and Lifecycle of Blackboard Courses**

**New Courses on Blackboard**

Blackboard courses are set up automatically for all courses sixty days prior to the start of each term and remain up for just over a year. Instructors must be listed as the course instructor in the Banner computer system in order to access the course on Blackboard. Contact the Registrar’s Office (860) 768-4594 or your department for help with getting listed as the official instructor.

- If you are teaching **multiple sections** of the same course and would like students from those sections enrolled into one Blackboard course, please fill out FCLD’s multiple-section course request form: [http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/fcld/MultiCReq.htm](http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/fcld/MultiCReq.htm)

- Once you have built your course in Blackboard, you can reuse the course content each term by copying it forward. Blackboard copying instructions may be found at [http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/fcld/guides/bblms.html](http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/fcld/guides/bblms.html).

All Blackboard instructors have a “sandbox” course, listed in the **My Courses** module of your **Blackboard Home Page** under **Courses You Are Teaching**. This course is a private space that can be used as a practice course. You are also provided with a second Blackboard user account that is enrolled as a student in your sandbox. You will need to log off from your instructor account and log in with your student account when you wish to see course from the student point-of-view. To login as your ‘practice student’, type in the your username which is your own username with an underscore in front of it (\_jdoe if your username is jdoe) and the password which is initially set to the last 4 digits of your University ID.
Enrollments
Students who are officially enrolled in a course (via the Registrar) are automatically enrolled into the Blackboard course as soon as the course is created. Add/drops are updated twice daily directly from the Banner system. **Faculty should avoid manually adding or dropping students in Blackboard courses.**

Course Availability – Unavailable vs. Available
All courses are created by default as ‘unavailable’ to students (hidden from students, but accessible to the instructor). To change the availability within a course go to the Course Management area, under Control Panel:
- Click Customization to reveal the drop-down menu click Properties.
- Scroll to Set Availability.
- Select Yes or No and click Submit.

Getting to Your Blackboard Course
After you log into Blackboard, you will see your Blackboard Home Page. Each Blackboard user has a unique Home Page that can only be viewed by you. Use Personalize Page and Add Module to customize your Homepage.

![Blackboard Home Page](image)

You probably want to explore the Tools menu. Under personal information, you will find a place to change your password (recommended).

Changing Your Blackboard Password

1. From your Blackboard Home Page, find the Tools menu at the left of your screen.
2. Select Personal Information.
3. Select Change Password.
4. Enter your new password twice.
5. Click Submit to save your changes.

**Note:** If you forgot your password, simply click on “Forget Your Password?” on the login page and Blackboard will send an email to your University of Hartford email address that contains a link which allows you to set a new password.
Basic Editing and Navigation Tools

Below are the basic buttons used to navigate Blackboard and access the course menus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Button</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Edit Mode" /></td>
<td>Edit Mode appears on the upper right of every course page. To edit a course, it must be ON. The OFF mode is useful for seeing the course the way students see it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Downward facing chrevrons" /></td>
<td>Downward facing chrevrons reveal dropdown menus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Double-sided arrows" /></td>
<td>Double-sides arrows are used to move content. Click on it and hold it down to ‘drag and drop’ the item to a new location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Sideways-facing chevrons" /></td>
<td>Sideways-facing chevrons will open sub-menus in the ‘working area’ of the your course (the area to the right of the course menu).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic Course Tools

The Course Menu

The default course menu includes tools, resources, and content areas. *Note: The grey tab just to the right will collapse and hide the menu.*

- **Announcements** – Use this to communicate changes, new content or other messages. Can also be used to email students.
- **Instructor Information** – used to provide students with your contact information (phone number, office hours, email, etc.)
- **Course Information** – Typically provides links to syllabus, goals and objectives for the course, grading policies, rubrics, and textbook information.
- **Course Documents** – Post articles, sample projects, guidelines.
- **Assignments** – Links to course assignments and submissions.
- **Discussion Board** – Provides an interactive discussion area.
- **Recordings** – If you are using Echo360 to record lectures, the recordings will be posted here.
- **Tools** – Simply a menu link to student Tools.
- **Library** – A link to the university’s online catalogs and resources.
- **Alerts and Notifications** – Instructor and students can turn on alerts to get email notification of newly added or edit course content, submitted assignments, etc.
- **Academic Honesty** – Links to the University’s guidelines on Academic Honesty and information about SafeAssign, Blackboard’s plagiarism detection tool.
- **Blackboard Help** - Accesses step-by-step instructions, video tutorial, or a way to send a quick question to FCLD via email.
The Control Panel – Your Access to Course Building Tools

As an instructor, there is an extra area displayed below that under the title Course Management called Control Panel. This is where you’ll find all of your tools, which are revealed when you click the associated chevron. Note: Students do not have access to the Control Panel.

Files – central repository of all your course files
Course Tools – used to access communication and editing tools
Evaluation – course statistics, Early Warning tools and performance dashboard showing overview of student activity in course
Grade Center – the online gradebook, which can be downloaded...
Users and Groups – access and view course roster, create groups
Customization – Includes course properties, making course available, menus for changing menu style, course colors, as well as making tools available (if you don’t see one that is mentioned in this guide)
Packages and Utilities – various tools for making course backups, coping course materials from a previous term, etc.

Customizable Course Menu: Adding, Renaming, and Deleting Menu Items

To add or edit buttons in the main Course Menu:
1. Click the “+” icon in the upper left of the Course Menu.
2. Choose the type of menu item needed.
3. Name the button, make it available to users and click Submit.

Button Choices

Content Area is a place to upload files or create content, such as Course Documents or Course Information.
Blank Pages adds a single page of content as a clickable link in your Course Menu. Only text, images and files can be added to Blank Pages.
Tool Link links to tools, including class blogs, wikis, etc.
Course Link creates a link to a specific area in your course. If you post your syllabus under “Course Information,” you can link to it from your Course Menu by adding a Course Link.
External Link pages make it easy to add links to Internet Web sites.
Module Pages are customizable “alert” areas that allow students to see grades, alerts, and tasks in a dashboard layout.
Subheaders and Dividers allow you to add headings & divider lines.
**Adding an Announcement**

Announcements are a quick way for instructors to communicate with students regarding the course. Announcements can be sent out as email if the instructor selects the “Override user Notification” option.

To create an announcement, go to the **Course Management** area under **Control Panel**:

1. Click **Course Tools** to reveal the drop-down menu and click **Announcements**, or simply select **Announcement** from the Student Menu.
2. Click **Create Announcement**.
3. Fill in both the **Subject** and **Message** sections.
4. Under options, choose whether or not to make the Announcements permanent (best-practice not to do so) or whether or not to add date restrictions. If you do not choose any dates, the message will display for seven days, starting the day you added it. After seven days, students can always review the announcements by scrolling down the Announcements page.
5. To modify or delete an existing announcement, click the chevron icon associated with that announcement and select Edit or Delete.

**Communicating with Students: Email and Messages**

**Send Email**

Blackboard includes a ready-made email distribution list for all students in your Blackboard course. Email in Blackboard is one-way, i.e., it is sent from Blackboard but students must read the email using own their email program. To send email within Blackboard, under **Control Panel**, click **Course Tools** to reveal the drop-down menu and click **Send Email**. Select one of the options for recipients (All Users, All Groups, etc.), then:

1. Enter a Subject and Message.
2. Select **Attach a File** if you wish to attach a file (optional).
3. Click **Submit**.

**Messages**

The Blackboard **Messages** tool provides a “Blackboard only” alternative to communicating with your students. Messages are sent and stored only within your Blackboard course. To send a message to members of your Blackboard course, under **Control Panel**, click **Course Tools** to reveal the drop-down menu and click **Messages**, then:

1. Click **Create Message**.
2. Click **To**, **Cc**, and/or **Bcc** and choose recipients.
3. Enter a Subject and a Message and click **Submit**.
Uploading a Few Course Files

If you only plan to upload a few files, you can just upload files directly to the content area. Make sure *Edit Mode* is ON. Please be sure to read about Course Files below, as adding many documents this way might become a headache later on in terms of course size and organization.

1. Click one of navigation buttons belong to Content Area such as *Course Documents*.
2. Click *Build Content* button.
3. Select *Item* under Build Content.
4. Type the name of material.
5. Type a brief description about the material or instruction for your students in the text box.
6. Click *Browse My Computer* to find the file.

![Image of Attachments](image)

Using Course Files to Add Content to your Blackboard Course

If you plan to upload a lot of files to Blackboard, you want to use *Course Files*. Course Files is a central file repository for Blackboard course files. Each Blackboard course has a file repository. Rather than uploading files directly to Course Documents or another Content Area, instructors can upload, organize and edit course materials right from Course Files. Students can only access files if the instructor creates links to them in Content Areas such as Course Documents, Course Information, etc. Used in conjunction with a related tool called Web Folder, an instructor can even edit and upload files directly from his or her computer desktop.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Each time you revise and upload a file using “Add Item” or “Add File”, you get a duplicate file in Course Files. Same with course copies…copying a course in three times will cause three copies of each file to appear in Course Files.

Uploading Files (to Course Files)

- Point to the *Upload* button on the Action Bar.
  - If you would like to upload individual files, select *Upload Files*. From there, you can drag and drop any files (or folders of files) that you would like to add to the course.
  - If you have a ZIP file of materials to add to the course, select *Upload Package*. This option will automatically unzip its contents, and create the same folder structure within Course Files.
- Click *Submit* to upload the files. Files can be in any format. Word, PDF, and Text files are easily opened by most students and maintain their format. Files submitted to Course Files are not accessible by students until you link them to a course content area (e.g., Course Documents).
Linking Course Files to Content Areas (so students can access them)

When you add a file to your Course Files, you can add a link to it in any content area of your course. To do this:

1. Make sure Edit Mode is ON.
2. Click one of navigation buttons belong to Content Area such as Course Documents.
3. Click Build Content button.
4. Select Item under Build Content.
5. Type the name of material.
6. Type a brief description about the material or instruction for your students in the text box.
7. Click Browse Course to find the file.
8. Select the file from Course Files.
9. You may select some options if necessary:
   a. Permit Users to View the Content Item (If yes, students can access it.)
   b. Track number of views (If yes, statistics will be recorded on student access.)
   c. Select Date and Time Restrictions (If you don’t specify dates, the file will go up the day you upload it and stay up for the duration of the course.)
10. Click Submit.

Always check your work by turning Edit Mode to Off and clicking links as your students will be doing.

Managing Course Content (e.g., moving, copying)

Posted content in your course has a chevron dropdown menu. Clicking this chevron reveals options to modify, copy, delete, and enhance that content item, as shown below.

- **Edit** – modify the item.
- **Adaptive Release** – can be used to trigger the release of course materials (e.g., 80 or higher on a quiz).
- **Set Review Status** – uses a visual open/shut ‘eye’ icon to indicate whether a student has accessed the content item.
- **Metadata** – catalog/record general information about the item.
- **Statistics Tracking/View Report** – allow instructors to view statistics for that item (which student clicked on it and when).
- **User Progress** – shows a dashboard of students’ progress for that particular item based on Review Status.
- **Copy** – allows you to copy that item to another of your own Blackboard courses or a different place in the same course.
- **Delete** – deletes the items from the course.
Other Tools for Building your Course

For instructions on how to set up and use each tool listed, use the User Guide found in your Blackboard course under Help, or select the Help button at the top of the page once logged into Blackboard. FCLD has separate documentation on many of the specific tools or features that includes instructions, tips for integrating them into teaching, and best practices.

Options for Adding Course Materials to Content Areas

Build Content
- Item – Add a file with a text description underneath.
- File – Add a file without any description
- Audio – Add an audio recording
- Image – Add an image file
- Video – Add a video file
- URL – Post a link to a website
- Learning Module – Add content as sequenced instruction
- Lesson Plan – Instructional Design wizard for building step-by-step lessons
- Syllabus – Create a modularized syllabus in Blackboard
- Course Link – Create a link to somewhere else in the course
- Content Packages (various) – Used to add advanced, premade learning objects
- Content Folder – creates folders for content, used to organize course materials by week, content type, etc.
- Blank Page – creates a blank page that you can create ‘on the fly’ (without uploading anything)
- Module Page – creates a new module page, similar to the Alerts and Notifications page.
- Tools Area – creates a link to a specific tool (e.g., blog, wiki, glossary, etc.)
- Flickr Photo – add photos from Flickr, a website for sharing photos
- SlideShare – add presentations from Slideshare, a website for sharing presentations (e.g., PowerPoint).
- YouTube Video – add videos from YouTube, a website for sharing videos
- Scholar Stream – add a tagged collection of bookmarks from Scholar
- Scholar Bookmark – select and add bookmarks from Scholar

Create Assessment
- Test – create a graded online quiz or test, using a variety of question types and options
- Survey - create an anonymous, non-graded online survey
- Assignment – create a button for students to submit a specific assignment to you in Blackboard
- Self and Peer Assessment – create an assignment for students to peer-review
- SafeAssignment – create a button for students to submit a specific assignment and have it checked by SafeAssign, Blackboard’s plagiarism detection tool.
Add Interactive Tool

Discussion Board – an asynchronous group communication tool used to discuss a specific topic. Participants post written items and use a reply button to create a threaded, discussion.

Blog – asynchronous group communication tool typically used to post one person’s perspective and have others write short comments in response to it. Typically focuses on a specific topic.

Journal – a more private communication tool typically used by one student to write reflections. Only the instructor reads and comments on them.

Wiki – a collaborative writing tool used by many authors to jointly write a single document. The final product is a series of linked web pages that can span many topics.

Groups – create private group space for student’s use. Each group includes a variety of tools such as chat, discussion, wikis, etc.

Chat – synchronous communication tool used to type ‘live’ messages in real time.

Virtual Classroom – synchronous communication tool used to teach ‘live’ using chat, white boards, and your course files.

Document Package – Used to upload zipped files to Blackboard.

Assign Textbook

Search for Textbook – search and post ready-made information about your text, including ISBN, whether it is required or not, and pricing.

Manual Entry Textbook – create your own textbook entry, similar to above, by typing the information in a form.

The Online Grade Center

Blackboard’s Grade Center is an online grade book that calculates grades, and allows you to track student progress, provide feedback to students, download grades to your computer – even create reports. You don’t have to type in student names, as Blackboard does it for you. All you have to do is add assignments, which become columns in the spreadsheet. Columns are created automatically by Blackboard if you use the following tools: Tests, Surveys, Assignment Tool, and graded Discussion Board forums. You enter grades directly into the cells of the spreadsheet with a simple point and click of your mouse. The Grade Center is very flexible, allowing you to drop lowest grades, weight grades, filter views, and more.

IMPORTANT: The Grade Center is complex. It is strongly recommended that you attend a Grade Center seminar even if you have used previous versions of Blackboard’s grade book. Please contact FCLD to find out when a Grade Center seminar is offered. Call 768-4661 or email fcld@hartford.edu or check our seminar schedule at http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/fcld/Seminars.htm

Viewing the Grade Center

Instructors, TAs and Graders are the only roles in Blackboard that can view, post, and edit the Grade Center. Students can only view their own individual grades.
Instructor View
To access the Grade Center as an instructor, go to the Course Management area, under Control Panel, click Grade Center, and then choose Full Grade Center.

![Blackboard Grade Center (Instructor's view)](image)

Student View
Students access Grade Center by selecting My Grades, either from the Student Menu if the instructor included it separately, or from the Tools menu.

![Blackboard Grade Center (Student's View)](image)
Reading the Grade Center – The Icon Legend

The Grade Center Icon Legend defines Blackboard’s grading symbols.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Icon</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>∅</td>
<td>Shows that the student has been blocked from the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Not Visible to Users</td>
<td>Instructor has selected the No option for “Show this column in My Grades.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Instructor has selected Complete/Incomplete as Primary Display and it is showing as “completed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs Grading</td>
<td>An item or portion of an item such as an essay needs to be viewed and graded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Modified Manually</td>
<td>The grade has been modified via a manual edit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempt in Progress</td>
<td>Student is currently working, and/or has ‘saved’ to return and work later. In any case, the student is not ready to have the instructor grade yet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Grade</td>
<td>A column can be viewed in a tab outside of Grade Center (not supported by the University of Hartford).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Exempted for this User</td>
<td>Instructors can exempt a student from a grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>!</td>
<td>Grade Center error.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade Center Basics

Below you will find instructions for basic Grade Center functions. More instructions and how-to videos can be found on the FCLD website here: [http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/fcld/help/BbLMS.htm](http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/fcld/help/BbLMS.htm)

Adding a Student (Row)

Students are automatically listed in the Grade Center, appearing as rows when they are enrolled into your Blackboard course. If a student drops the course, it is important to know that his/her grades (and other course work) will not be deleted from the course. If the student should add the course again later, he/she will simply reappear in your Grade Center along with any of the grades/course work.

Create an Item (Column)

You have the option of adding items, which make up the columns, either manually or automatically. To add an item manually, select Create Column (see image below) and fill in information such as column name, description, category, and points possible. **Note:** If you would like to weight grades, then it is important to enter a category for each item that you add. In addition, Grade Center columns or items are added automatically when you use Tests and Surveys, Assignment Tool, and Graded Discussion Board Forums; you simply need to modify them to your specifications after they are added, verifying points possible, weight, and/or category.
**Weighting Grades**

After you have created your Grade Center columns and are ready to weight the items, select **Add Calculated Column** (see image below). After providing the column name and description, you have the ability to weight whatever columns you wish by either item or category or a combination of both, and can consider dropping lowest grade or taking only the highest grade, for instance.

![Image of Grade Center: Full Grade Center](image)

Select Create Calculated Column and Choose Weighted Column to Weight Grades in Grade Center

**Entering Grades**

Grades can be entered directly into the spreadsheet by clicking a cell, typing a grade, then hitting the **Enter** key. Alternately, you can select **View Grade Details** from the cell drop down menu and enter a grade by selecting the **Manually Override** tab and entering the grade in the box provided. Either way is quick and easy and allows you to advance to the next student or column.

**Downloading Grades**

It is a good practice to keep a copy of your students’ grades on your own computer as well as in Blackboard’s Grade Center. One way to do this is to download your Grade Center two or three times per semester, using the Download tool as shown below.

![Image of Grade Center: Full Grade Center](image)
Blackboard Best Practices & Tips

- Be sure you provide your students with the Student Guide each semester and point out the Blackboard Help button so they can access student handouts on Blackboard.
- Start small and add more each semester; don’t feel like you need to do it all the first semester.
- Keep file sizes small, kilobytes rather than megabytes.
- Do a Blackboard orientation session with your students.
- Be transparent when things go wrong; technology doesn’t go perfectly all the time for anyone!
- Update and revise your course site regularly.
- Start with a welcome and communicate expectations about using Blackboard to your students. Plan a Blackboard assignment for week one if you want students to use it regularly.
- Provide clear instructions if plugins are required or if files take a while to open/download.
- Follow Fair Use Guidelines for online learning; cite sources and warn students some materials are protected by copyright (can be done by an announcement).
- Be sure to balance your Blackboard and in-class assignments so as not to overload your students.
- Try out some of the advanced Blackboard workshops to learn more.

Hardware and Software Specifications for Blackboard

- You need a computer with multimedia capabilities (i.e., sound with speakers), a monitor capable of at least 800 x 600 resolution, a modem or Internet connection of least a 56K modem connection, and an Internet Browser in order to access Blackboard.
- Your browser must accommodate both Java and JavaScript for some functions of the course. These are functions you can turn on in your browser.
- Your browser must be set to accept cookies (use minimum browser security settings).
- Firewalls will affect your ability to access and use Blackboard.
- Popup Blockers will affect your ability to use the Collaboration Tools and other features.

Windows Users Only – Downloading Java
Java is required to use Collaboration Tools in Blackboard. This plug-in may be downloaded from a page that appears when you join a Collaboration Session, or, visit http://java.sun.com/products/plugin/index.jsp and download Java. MAC OS X has Java installed.

Enabling Cookies in Your Internet Browser
In order to use Blackboard on your personal computer, you must have cookies enabled. Depending on your browser type, do the following:

Internet Explorer 7 or 8
Open Internet Explorer and select Tools → Internet Options. Select the Privacy Tab.
1. Using the sliding bar, slide the bar down so that the cookie settings are Medium or lower.
2. Click Apply. Then click OK.

Safari
1. Open Safari and select Safari → Preferences.
2. Click Security.
3. Under Cookies select the option “Always.”
4. Close the Window.

Mozilla Firefox
1. Open Firefox and select Tools → Options.
2. Click Privacy.
3. Check “Accept Cookies from Sites.” And then click
4. Click OK.
Enabling JavaScript in your Internet Browser
Blackboard requires that your browser accommodate JavaScript for some functions to work properly. Please do the following to ensure your browser is ready:

Enabling JavaScript in Internet Explorer
Open Internet Explorer and go to Tools → Internet Options.
1. Click on the Security Tab, then Custom Level.
2. Scroll to the section titled Scripting.
3. Verify that Active Scripting is enabled, click OK, Yes to the warning, and then OK.

Enabling JavaScript in Mozilla Firefox
1. Open Firefox and Select Tools → Options
2. Select the Content tab.
3. Make sure the box next to Enable JavaScript has a checkmark. Then click OK.

Supported Browsers & Operating Systems for Blackboard 9.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microsoft Windows Operating System:</th>
<th>Internet Explorer® 8</th>
<th>Internet Explorer 7</th>
<th>Firefox 3.6</th>
<th>Firefox 3.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windows® XP (32-bit)</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows Vista® (32-bit)</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows Vista (64-bit)</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows 7 (32-bit)</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows 7 (64-bit)</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Apple MacOS Operating System:       | Safari® 5.0          | Safari 4.0         | Safari 3.2  | Firefox 3.6 | Firefox 3.5 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Mac OSX 10.5 "Leopard®"             | Provisional          | Compatible         | Compatible  | Compatible  |
| Mac OSX 10.6 "Snow Leopard®"        | Provisional          | Certified          | Unsupported | Certified   | Compatible  |

Certified: fully tested and supported.
Compatible: partially tested but should function properly.
Provisional: future technologies considered supported by Blackboard Support.
Unsupported: either impossible or not tested.

Please Note:
- Sun Java™ Runtime Environment 5 (JRE™ 5) is no longer supported. It may continue to work but Java 6 Update 13 or higher is the only supported JRE.
- Internet Explorer 5 and 6, Firefox 1.x and 2.0, Safari 2.0, and Google Chrome are not supported.
- Internet Explorer 8 is supported in Standards Mode only. Some known issues can be resolved by using Compatibility Mode (emulates IE7 behavior).
Faculty Center for Learning Development (FCLD)
FCLD provides consulting and instructional support to faculty and staff who are using technology in teaching and learning. The FCLD Faculty Lab in Mortensen 203a is available for faculty support and use and is equipped with instructional technology-related equipment including: PCs, Macs, scanners, and projectors as well as support staff. Faculty wishing to use the lab may contact FCLD.
Phone: 768-4661
Email: fcld@hartford.edu
Website: http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/fcld/

Information Technology Services (ITS)
ITS Help Desk – Computing Center
For general computer and Internet/network support questions (not directly related to the classroom but rather passwords, Internet/email problems, Banner, campus Facebook).
Phone: 768-5999
Email: its@hartford.edu
Website: http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/its/

Media Technology Services (MTS) – Harry Jack Gray Center E113
MTS maintains and installs classroom equipment, such as projectors, Sympodiums, and interactive white boards, delivers and sets up technology needed for classes such as laptops, overhead projectors, microphones, sound systems, DVD/VCRs, digital cameras, etc., and provides instruction on its use. MTS is also responsible for overseeing ECHO360 Lecture Capture classrooms and administers WebEx web conferencing accounts.
Phone: (860) 768-4643 (Main) or (860) 768-4662 (Tech Line)
Website: www.hartford.edu/mts