

Creating Groups in Blackboard

Blackboard can be used for student group projects and other small group activities. Blackboard groups allow smaller groups of students to meet online privately to share and exchange files, send group emails, participate in discussion boards, collaborate using blogs and wikis, and meet to chat in virtual classrooms. It's especially useful if an instructor has multiple sections enrolled in the same Blackboard course, as each section can be set up as a group allowing the instructor a means to communicate with each section individually.

Blackboard now has 3 ways to add students into groups:

- **Self-Enroll** – Students can select which group they want to join.
- **Manual Enroll** – The instructor creates the groups and enrolls students in each group.
- **Random Enroll** – The instructor creates the groups and Blackboard assigns students to the groups randomly.

Creating a group has two parts: first you create the groups, and then you assign students to the group.

Creating Groups

To create groups in your course:

- In the **Control Panel** of your course, click on **Users and Groups** and then **Groups**.
- Point to **Create** in the Action Bar and select the type of groups you would like to create. (The options available to each group are the same.)
- Give the groups a name such as 'Final Project Group'. Blackboard will add a number to each group name (e.g. 'Final Project Group 1', 'Final Project Group 2').
- Make sure "Group is visible to students" is set to Yes.
- Decide which tools you'd like to make available to each group under Tool Availability:
 - **Blog** – Students can keep individual or group blogs. Both students and the instructor can comment on blog posts. Blogs can be graded.
 - **Discussion Board** - Group members can have discussions with one another. Note that instructors must set up the forum for students.
 - **E-mail** – Group members can send emails to the members of their group.
 - **File Exchange** – Group members can share files. Be sure to append filenames with initials to avoid overwriting each other's files.
 - **Journal** – Group members can keep individual journals. Only the instructor can read student journal entries. Journals can be graded.
 - **Tasks** – Group members can set tasks with due dates and priority levels.
 - **Blackboard Collaborate Ultra** – Group members can create and access session recordings.
 - **Content Market Tools** – Group members can access valuable external learning materials
 - **Wiki** – Group members can collaborate on a wiki. Wikis can be graded.

The final steps for assigning students to groups will vary according to the option you have chosen for group enrollment.

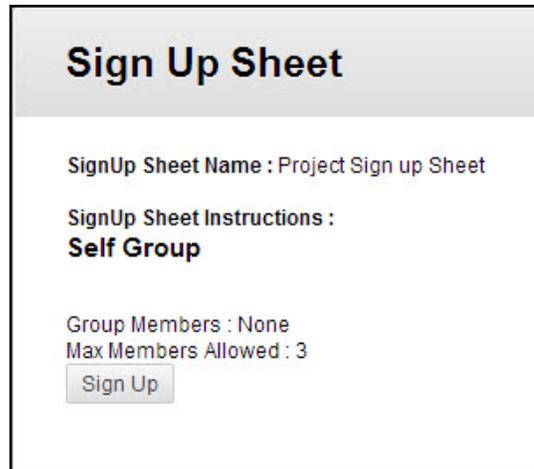
Self-Enroll

If you are allowing students to choose their own groups, select the **Self-Enroll** option. (NOTE: There are two ways to Manual Enroll. Either as a *Single Group* or as a *Group Set*).

Single Group → Self Enroll

NOTE: This option sets up only one (1) group at a time. You will have to manually create all the groups you need to have students enroll in.

- Give a name for the Group
- Under **Sign-up Options**, give a name for the sign-up sheet and instructions for signing up.
- Select which tools you want students to be able to access in their group.
- Select the maximum number of students that can enroll into the group.
- If you want students to see who else is in a group before signing up, click on **Show Members**.
- Click Submit.

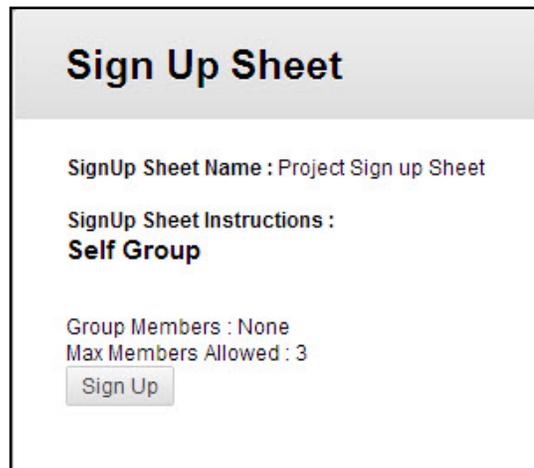


The screenshot shows a 'Sign Up Sheet' configuration window. At the top, the title 'Sign Up Sheet' is displayed in a grey header. Below the header, the following information is shown: 'SignUp Sheet Name : Project Sign up Sheet', 'SignUp Sheet Instructions : Self Group', 'Group Members : None', and 'Max Members Allowed : 3'. At the bottom of the window, there is a 'Sign Up' button.

Group Set → Self Enroll

NOTE: This option sets up multiple groups at one time that students can self-enroll in.

- Give a name for the Group
- Under **Sign-up Options**, give a name for the sign-up sheet and instructions for signing up.
- Select which tools you want students to be able to access in their group.
- Select the maximum number of students that can enroll into the group.
- If you want students to see who else is in a group before signing up, click on **Show Members**.
- Select the total number of groups you would like to create.
- Click **Submit**.



The screenshot shows a 'Sign Up Sheet' configuration window, identical in layout to the one above. It features a grey header with the title 'Sign Up Sheet'. The configuration details are: 'SignUp Sheet Name : Project Sign up Sheet', 'SignUp Sheet Instructions : Self Group', 'Group Members : None', and 'Max Members Allowed : 3'. A 'Sign Up' button is located at the bottom.

When your students log in to your course, they go to **Tools → Groups** to see the group signup sheet. From here, they can click on a button to sign up for a group.

Manual Enroll

If you want to choose which students should go in which groups, select the **Manual Enroll** option. (NOTE: There are two ways to Manual Enroll. Either as a *Single Group* or as a *Group Set*).

Single Group → Manual Enroll

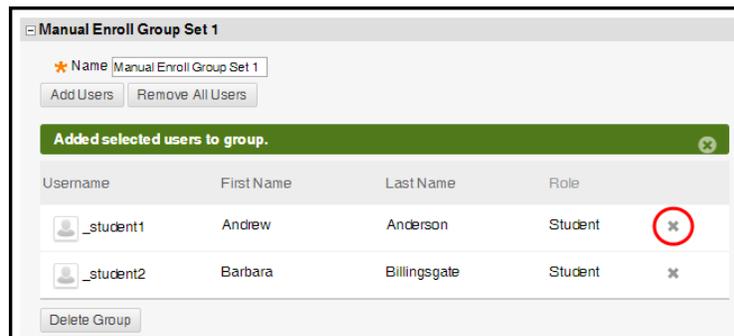
Note: This option enrolls students in only one (1) group at a time.

- Select which tools you want students to be able to access in their group.
- Under **Membership**, click the **Add** button to choose which students you want to enroll.
- A new window will open and in the *Add Users* panel, check the students you want to enroll, then click **Submit**.
- When done, click **Submit**.

Group Set → Manual Enroll

Note: This option will create multiple groups with the same preferences at one time.

- Select which tools you want students to be able to access in their group.
- Under **Group Set Options**, select the number of groups you would like to create.
- Click **Submit**. A new window will open up, allowing you to choose members for each group by clicking the **Add Users** button under each Group Set or by clicking the **Randomize Enrollments** button to randomly enroll.
- Students can be removed from a group by clicking on the X to the far right of their name as shown below:



Removing a Member from a Group

- Use the **Add Group** and **Delete Group** buttons to add or remove extra groups if needed.
- When you have assigned students to each group, click **Submit** at the bottom of the page.

Random Enroll

Group Set → Random Enroll

Blackboard can also assign students into groups automatically. The instructor has the following options:

- **Determine Number of Groups by:** Choose either the number of students you want in each group or the total number of groups you want, and Blackboard will divide the students accordingly.
- **Determine How to enroll any Remaining Members:** If the groups do not divide out evenly, you can choose to distribute the remaining members amongst the groups, put the remaining members in their own group, or manually add the remaining members to groups.

4. Membership

Automatic distribution applies only to students who are currently enrolled in the course. Additional students may be enrolled manually.

*** Determine Number of Groups by**

Number of Students per Group

Number of Groups

*** Determine How to Enroll any Remaining Members**

Distribute the remaining members amongst the groups

Put the remaining members in their own group

Manually add the remaining members to groups

Settings for Randomly Enrolled Groups

Once you have decided how you would like to divide your groups, click **Submit**.

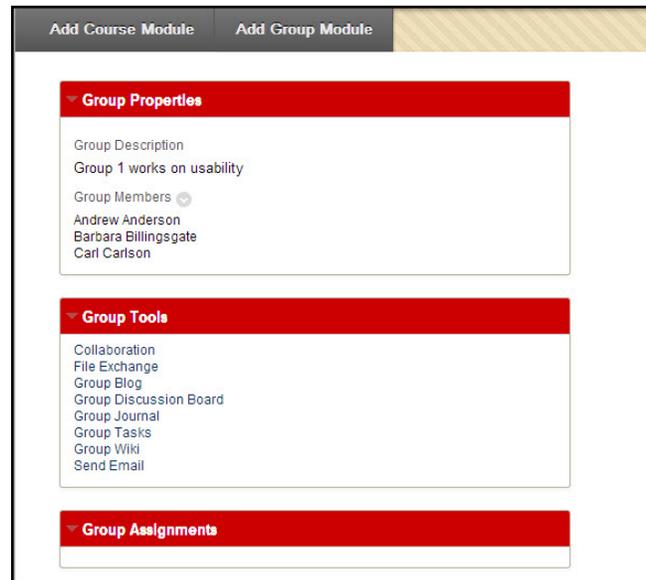
Editing Group Settings

To edit the settings for a single group, go to **Control Panel → Users and Groups → Groups**. Click on the arrow next to the group name and select Edit. From here, you have the following options:

- **Group Information:** Edit the group name, add a description, or change the group availability.
- **Tool Availability:** Change which tools are available to the group, and decide which tools you want to include in the Grade Center.
- **Module Personalization:** Check **Allow Personalization** to let group members personalize their own group space.
- **Membership:** Add members to (or remove members from) the current group.

Instructor Access to Groups

To access individual group pages, go to **Control Panel → Users and Groups → Groups** and click on the group name. From here, you can view and grade students' work in all of the group tools, including Blogs, Wikis, Journals and the Discussion Board.



Group Page

Starting the Group Discussion – Adding Threads

If you would like students to post in the Group Discussion Board, you need to create a thread to “kick off” the discussion.

- Enter a group page and click on **Group Discussion Board**.
- Click on the group name to enter the forum.
- Select **Create Thread** in the upper left corner of the screen and add a starter question.
- Use the **Reply** button to respond to student postings.

Student Access to Groups

When students enter your Blackboard course, they will see their groups underneath the Course Menu. Click on the arrow to the right of the group name to open the page for this group and access the group tools (Blogs, Discussion Board, etc.). Students can only access the groups in which they are enrolled.

Removing/Deleting a Group

To remove a group:

- Go to Control Panel → Users and Groups → Groups.
- Click on the arrow next to the group name and select **Delete**.
- You will receive a warning message. Click **OK** to continue.
- If you have chosen to have graded Group Blogs, Wikis or Journals, a page will open up asking you which items you would like to remove from the Grade Center. Select the items you want to remove, and click **Delete**.

Getting Help with Technology at the University of Hartford

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 and Staff needing support with Blackboard or other instructional technologies, should contact FCLD.

Phone: (860) 768-4661 **Email:** fld@hartford.edu

Website: <http://www.hartford.edu/fld>

Student Blackboard Support

The following is student support for Blackboard only. All other support technical support issues need to be addressed to the Office of Technology Services (below).

Phone: (860) 768-4636 **Email:** bbsupport@hartford.edu

FAQ/Submit a Ticket: <http://www.hartford.edu/studentbbsupport>

Information Technology Services (ITS) Help Desk

For general computer and Internet/network support questions (not directly related to the classroom but rather passwords, Internet/email problems, Banner/Self-Service, campus Facebook).

Phone: (860) 768-4357 **Email:** helpdesk@hartford.edu

Website: <http://hartford.edu/ots>

Media Technology Services (MTS)

Faculty should contact MTS for assistance scheduling or implementing classroom technology (2-Way interactive video classrooms, Smart Podiums, laptops, etc.), for setting up WebEx accounts, or for scheduling and instruction for a wide variety of media equipment and resources like LCD data projectors, CD/cassette players, TVs and VCRs, digital video, and more.

Phone: (860) 768-4357 **Website:** <http://www.hartford.edu/mts>