Customizing Your Blackboard Course

Adding a Course Banner

A Course Banner is Blackboard’s name for an image that appears at the top of the Announcements Page, which is the first page students see in your course. Blackboard will accept any web-based image type (files with extensions .gif, .jpg, .png, etc.). Blackboard does not resize images to fit, i.e., you must edit your image for the best fit before you upload it.

To add a Course Banner to your course (see example below):

- Under the Control Panel, go to Customization → Teaching Style.
- Under Select Banner, use the Browse My Computer button to upload a new banner to your course. Note: Large banners may make it difficult to see announcements.

![Customized Banner Appearing on the Course Announcements Page](image)

To remove an existing banner, go to Customization → Teaching Style and click the box next to Delete this banner under the picture of the banner.

Changing the Course Menu

It is possible to customize the list of items that show on the left of your course. Blackboard calls these items the ‘Course Menu’. You can rename, hide, remove, or add new items to your Course Menu. You can even change the item style and color. Changing the Course Menu color might help to distinguish sections if you teach multiple sections of the same course.

Renaming Course Menu Items

To rename a Course Menu item, do the following:

1. Point to the item with your cursor, then click on the arrow that appears to the right of the item and select Rename Link.
2. Type in a new name for the item.
3. Click on the green check mark to save the change.
**Hiding Unwanted Course Menu Items**

To hide a Course Menu item from students, do the following:

1. Point to the item with your cursor, then click on the arrow that appears to the right of the item and select **Hide Link**.
2. Notice that hidden menu items, ‘Quizzes’ in this case show an icon to indicate it is hidden:

   ![Hidden Link/Button](image1)

**Adding new Menu Buttons**

To add a new menu item or button, click on the white plus sign above your course menu, then select what type of menu item to add. The steps for adding Course Menu items are much the same for each type of item:

1. Click the plus sign at the top of the menu.
2. Select type of item you wish to add.
3. Fill in a name.
4. Some button types may ask you to select additional information (such as which tool to use for a Tool Link or a URL for an External Link).

   ![Click the + sign, then choose what type of menu item to add.](image2)

5. Select **Available to Users**. This allows students to see it.
6. Click **Submit**. You will now have a new button on your Course Menu.
7. To rearrange menu items, point to the item and click and hold the double-sided arrow to the left of the item name to move it.

If you created a new Content Area, you are ready to add files/content to it. If it is a new tool, clicking on the button should link directly to the tool.

The types of menu items are as follows:

- **Content Area** items are the top-level course areas. They hold your course materials. Typically, courses contain multiple content areas such as Course Information, Course Documents, and Assignments. After you create a content area, you add content to it with online lectures, multimedia, tests, and communication tools, for instance.
• **Module Page** items (not to be confused with Learning Modules) are customizable “alert” areas that allow students to see grades, alerts, and tasks in a dashboard layout. All new Blackboard courses have a default module page called *Alerts and Notifications*. Instructors and students may add further modules to this page. Module Pages are unique to each user.

• **Blank Page** items add 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** items are links to tools, such as My Grades, Blogs, Wikis, etc.

• **Web Link** pages make it easy to add links to Internet Web sites.

• **Course Link** items create an area in your course where students can access a specific course item. For example, if you post your syllabus under “Course Information,” you can link to it from your Course Menu by adding a Course Link.

• **Subheaders and Dividers** allow you to add headings and divider lines to make your Course Menu clear.

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**Changing the Course Menu Style**

To change the style of your Course Menu:

- From **Control Panel**, click **Customization** and select **Teaching Style**.
- Scroll down to **Select Menu Style**.
- Next to **Style**, select **Text** or **Buttons**.

If you choose **Buttons** (see image below):

- Click the tiny plus sign to the left of **Button Library** to reveal all the choices, and then click on the style of button you wish to use.
- Check the preview as you make style choices. Note that not all button styles with their default text colors are good choices as some are more legible than others.
- Click Submit to make the change.
Selecting the Style of the Default image buttons
If you choose **Text** (see image below):

- Click on the arrows next to **Background Color** and **Text Color** to open color options.
- Click on the desired color.
- Click **Apply** to finish.

As an FYI, the colors black or white may not be readily apparent from the color picker. Note the color positions for each in the image on the right.
Adding a Faculty Profile Picture

Blackboard will accept any web-based image type (files with extensions .gif, .jpg, .png, etc.). To add a picture of yourself to your Instructor Information area:

- Click **Instructor Information** on your Course Menu.
- Click on **Create Contact**.
- Complete the information (only email is required).
- Scroll down to **Options**.
  - Select to make profile available.
  - Use the **Browse** button to locate the image/picture file on your computer. It must be a jpeg, png, or gif file format.
  - Image size should be approximately 150 x 150 pixels. Images are resized to fit 150 x 150 pixels, so images that are not this size may appear distorted.
  - Add a website address (URL) to a personal website if you wish.
  - Click **Submit**.

Hiding Old Courses on the My Courses Module

You may want to hide older versions of courses so you don’t mix them up with the current term. Here’s how to hide them, but still retain access to them when needed.

- Log into Blackboard. You are now on your **Blackboard Home Page**.
- Point to the module named **My Courses**. Click on the gear icon that appears to the right.

On the next screen, deselect every box associated with any courses you don't want to see when you log into Blackboard.
- Click **Submit**.
Getting Help with Technology at the University of Hartford

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

Phone: (860) 768-4661    Email: fcld@hartford.edu
Website: http://www.hartford.edu/fcld

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