UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

FACULTY CENTER FOR LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

Faculty Guide to Blackboard

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, or weather-related), instructors should plan to use Blackboard to continue teaching. This is a detailed guide; a quick guide is available from the Faculty Center for Learning Development (FCLD) website: http://www.hartford.edu/academics/faculty/fcld/

Here are the steps for getting started using Blackboard.
1. Get a University email account through Help Desk Services. Go to the Help Desk in the main library or call (860) 768-4357 (on campus) or (844) 292-3213 (off campus). A day after the email account is active, the Blackboard account should be available.
2. Contact FCLD for a Blackboard orientation 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 *My Blackboard* page in the *My Courses* box. Enter a course by clicking on it.
5. Check course roster against the one listed in Banner Self Service http://banweb.hartford.edu/
6. Upload and organize your course files and folders in the 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: Student Blackboard Support (860) 768-4636.
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 the Help Desk on the main floor of Mortensen Library. 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. Be sure to change your password once logged in.
- Click **Login.** You will now see your Blackboard Homepage.

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

(Your Name)
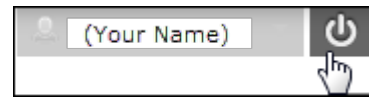
Logout Button

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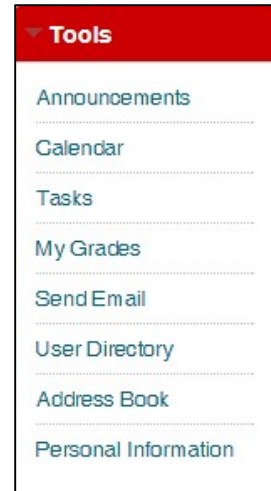
Note: If you forgot your password, simply click on "*Forget Your Password?*" on the login page and Blackboard will send an email to your University of Hartford email address that contains a link which allows you to set a new password.

Tools

Announcements
Calendar
Tasks
My Grades
Send Email
User Directory
Address Book
Personal Information

Online Blackboard Help

Instructions are available for both you and your students. Select the **Help** icon at the bottom of the dropdown menu on your My Blackboard Home page (see image at left). This links to many faculty support materials, including videos, quick guides, and the FCLD website. You can also go to http://help.blackboard.com , maintained by Blackboard. Be sure you are filter it for only Blackboard 9 Q2 2018.

FCLD maintains a faculty help line at (860) 768-4661 or at fcld@hartford.edu.

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

Help is also available for Faculty and Students via the **Technical Support** tab at the top of the Blackboard window, as well as the **Help** link on the course menu within a Blackboard Course.

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://portal.office.com and login using your full email address and password.

- For additional information on email, go to http://hartford.edu/ots

Administration and Lifecycle of Blackboard Courses

New Courses on Blackboard

Blackboard courses are set up automatically for all courses approximately 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: https://www.hartford.edu/faculty-staff/faculty/fcld/blackboard-course-requests-forms/multi-section-course-request-form.aspx

➢ 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: https://www.hartford.edu/faculty-staff/faculty/fcld/teaching-blackboard/forms/course-copy-request-form.aspx

All Blackboard instructors may request a "sandbox" course, a private space that can be used as a practice course. If you do not have one, you can request one by emailing fcld@hartford.edu.

Student Preview Button

The Student Preview button was introduced in the 2015 update of Blackboard, replacing the need for instructor underscore accounts (e.g. _jdoe). With this feature, instructors can now preview the course as a student with the click of a button instead of logging in and out of Blackboard. Many instructors find this feature useful for checking Blackboard Grades, previewing tests, etc. This button is found directly under the tabs right next to the **Edit Mode** toggle.

To enter *Student Preview* mode, simply click the **Student Preview** button. A gold banner will appear at the top of your Blackboard course letting you know that you are in Student Preview mode. Navigate within the course and check out assignments, tests, groups and grades as if you were the student.

To exit *Student Preview*, click the **Exit Preview** button found on the far right.

Click the Exit Preview button to go back to Instructor View

Upon exiting, you will have a couple of options:
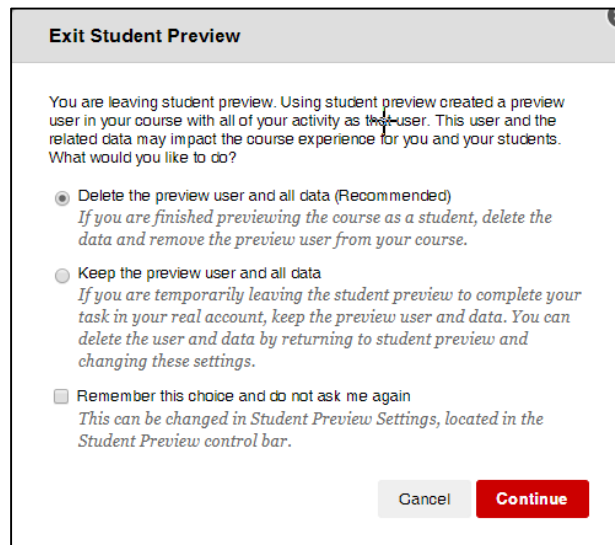
Options upon exiting Student Preview Mode

1. **Delete the preview user and all data** – use this option if you just wanted a quick view to see whether or not an assignment or test was enabled.
2. **Keep the preview user and all data** – use this option if you want to work in your grade center to make sure columns and totals are set up correctly.
3. **Remember this choice and do not ask me again** – select this if you plan to be in and out of the student preview mode and plan to keep your preview user data.

NOTE: When you elect to keep the preview user and all data, an entry will be created in your *Users* list in your course, as well as within your grade center, which you will find is a combination of your username_previewuser. You can grade this user just as you would any other student in your course.


Preview User in the Grade Center

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 three times a day from the Banner system. **Faculty should avoid manually adding or dropping students in Blackboard courses.**

Course Availability – Unavailable vs. Available
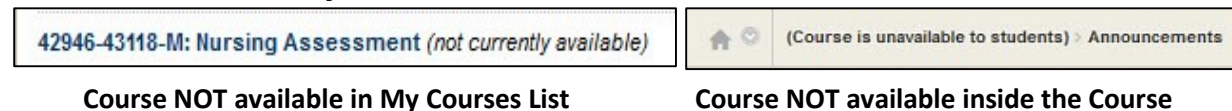

Course NOT available in My Courses List   **Course NOT available inside the Course**

All courses are created by default as 'unavailable' - hidden from students, but accessible to the instructor. If your course is not available, you will see a message 'not currently available.' To change the availability:

- Enter the course and be sure edit mode is on (green light in upper right corner).
- Under **Control Panel** and select **Customization**
- Click P**roperties.**
- Scroll to **Set Availability.**
- Select **Yes** or **No** and click **Submit.**

Alternatively, there is a new way to toggle course availability:

- Go into any content area in the course (e.g. Course Documents, Assignments, etc.).
- Click the lock icon in the upper right (next to Edit Mode).
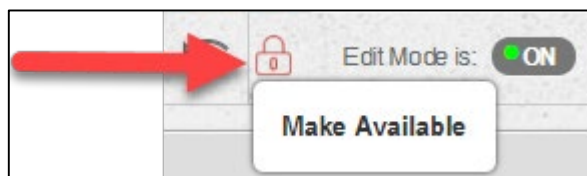
Toggle Course Availability by clicking the Lock Icon

Getting to Your Blackboard Course

After you log into Blackboard, you will see your *My Blackboard* Page. Each Blackboard user has a unique Home Page that can only be accessed by that user.
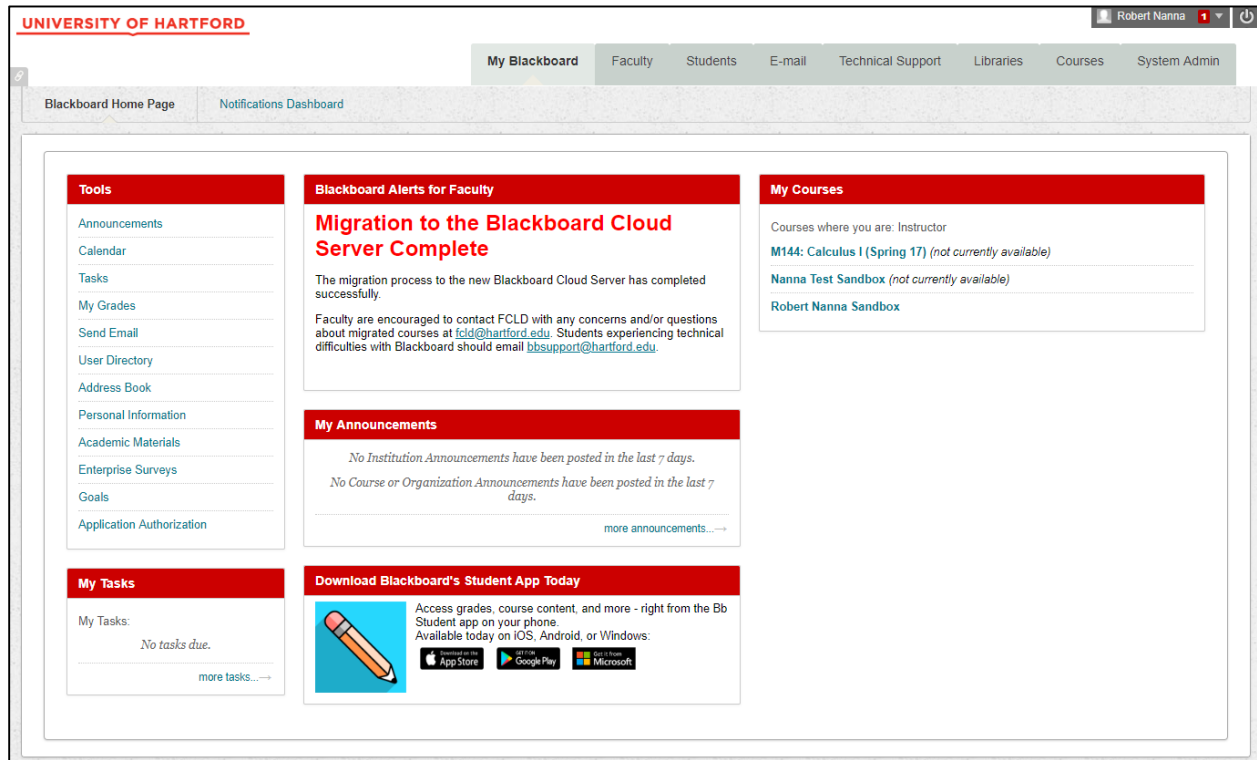
My Blackboard Page

You probably want to explore the **Tools** menu. Under **Personal Information**, you will find a place to change your password (recommended for first time users).

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, objectives for the course, grading policies, rubrics, and textbook information.

Course Documents – Post articles, sample projects, guidelines.

Assignments – Links to course assignments and submissions.

Course Evaluations – Direct link to WDYT Evaluations

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.

Alerts and Notifications – Instructor and students can turn on alerts to get email notification of newly added or edited course content, submitted assignments, etc.

Library – A link to online catalogs and resources.

Academic Honesty – Links to the University's guidelines on Academic Honesty and information about SafeAssign, Blackboard's plagiarism detection tool.

Student Resources – Links to useful student information on the University's website.

Help – Links to the Student Blackboard Help Page
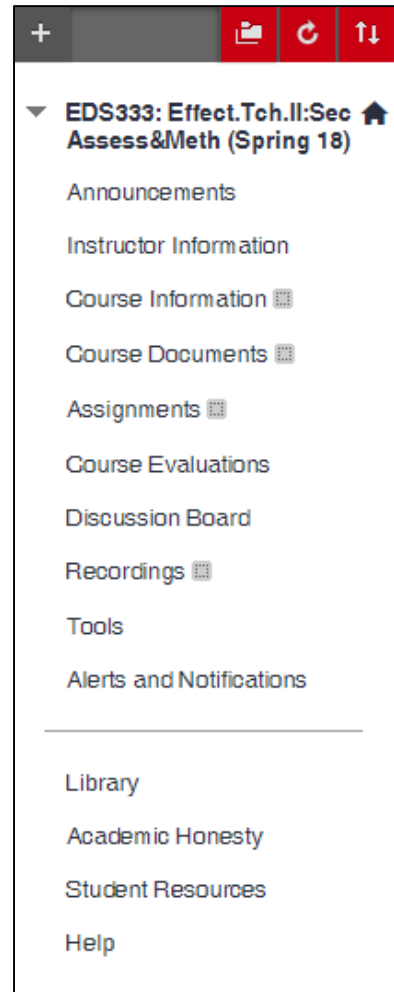
Customizable Course Menu: Adding, Renaming, and Deleting Menu Items

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.

Module Pages are customizable "alert" areas that allow students to see grades, alerts, and tasks in a dashboard layout.

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.

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

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.
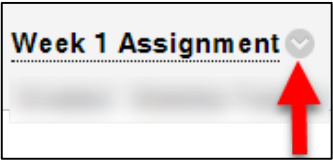
Subheaders and Dividers allow you to add headings & divider lines.
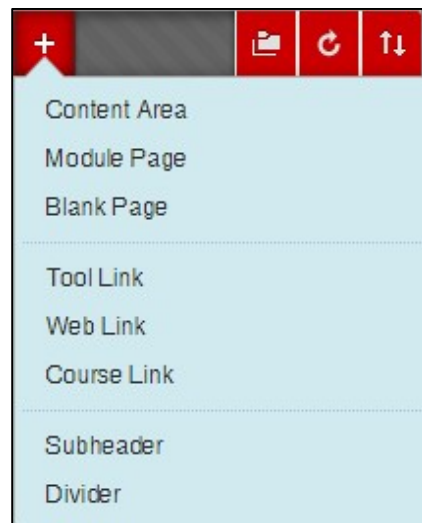
Basic Editing and Navigation Tools

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

Tool	Description
Edit Mode is: ON	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.
	Student Preview appears on the upper right of every course page (next to edit mode). To view your course as a student would, and enable a "preview user" click this button.

Tool	Description
Week 1 Assignment	Downward facing arrows reveal dropdown menus. You might only find them when your mouse is hovered over them.
↕	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.
→	Sideways-facing arrows will open sub-menus in the 'working area' of your course (the area to the right of the course menu).

The Control Panel – Your Access to Course Building Tools

Most of the tools you need to build a course are under the **Control Panel**. Each menu item has a sub-menu of tools. *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)

COURSE MANAGEMENT

▼ Control Panel
▶ Files
▶ Course Tools
▶ Evaluation
▶ Grade Center
▶ Users and Groups
▶ Customization
▶ Packages and Utilities
▶ Help

Packages and Utilities – various tools for making course backups, coping course materials from a previous term, etc.

Help – accesses Blackboard's help materials

Adding an Announcement

Announcements are a quick way for instructors to communicate with students regarding the course. They can be sent out as an immediate email if the instructor selects the "Email Announcement" option.

1. Enter the course and be sure you are in edit mode.

2. Click on the **Announcements** menu button.

3. Click **Create Announcement.**

4. Fill in both the *Subject* and *Message* sections.

5. Under options, choose whether or not to make the Announcements date restricted. We recommend you use Not Date Restricted – that way students can always go back and scroll through the announcements to find it. Otherwise, you use the *Display After* and *Display Until* to control how long it is visible to students.

6. To automatically email the announcement to students, be sure "*Send a copy of this announcement immediately*" is enabled.

7. To modify or delete an existing announcement, click the down arrow 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. Enter your course and ensure Edit mode is on.

1. Under Control Panel, select **Course Tools**.

2. Select **Send Email** from the list.

3. Select **All Users** (or one of the other options).

4. Enter a Subject and Message.

5. Select **Attach a File** if you wish to attach a file (optional).

6. Click **Submit**.
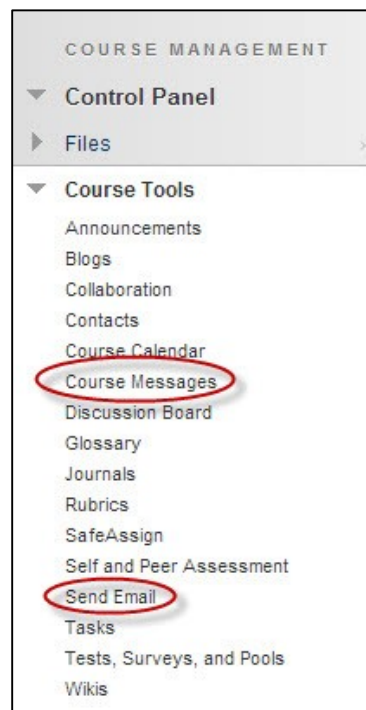
Course Messages

The Blackboard *Course Messages* tool provides a "Blackboard only" alternative to communicating with your students. Messages are sent and stored **only** within your Blackboard course.

1. Under Control Panel, select **Course Tools.**
2. Select **Course Messages** (see previous image).
3. Click **Create Message.**
4. Click **To**, **Cc**, and/or **Bcc** and choose recipients.
5. Enter a Subject and a Message and click **Submit**.

Adding 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.

Uploading a File (one at a time)

1. Enter the course and be sure you are in edit mode.
2. Click one of Content Area menu buttons (e.g., **Course Documents, Course Information)**.
3. Click **Build Content** button.
4. Select **File** under the Create menu.
5. Type the name of material – this is a title, so be sure to use capitalization.
6. Click **Browse My Computer** to find the file (alternatively you can drag and drop a file inside dotted-line area).
7. Fill in the remaining options and then click **Submit**.
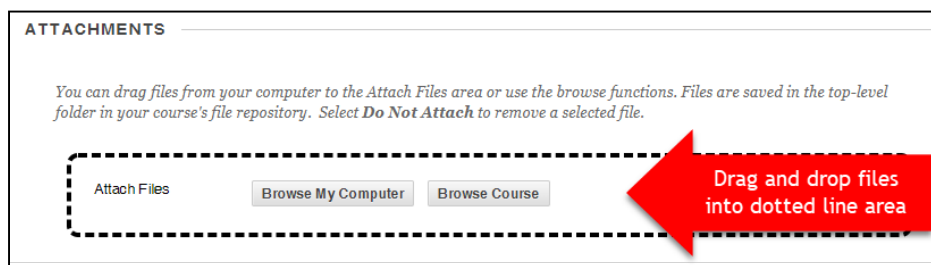
Drag and drop files into the dotted line area under Attachments

Uploading File(s) with a Description Box (can attach several files at once)

1. Enter the course and be sure you are in edit mode.
2. Click one of Content Area menu buttons (e.g., **Course Documents, Course Information**).
3. Click **Build Content** button.
4. Select **Item** under the Create menu.
5. Type the name of material – this is a title, so be sure to use capitalization.
6. Type a brief description about the material or instruction for your students in the text box.
7. Click **Browse My Computer** to find the file (alternatively you can drag and drop a file inside dotted-line area).
8. Fill in the remaining options and then click **Submit**.
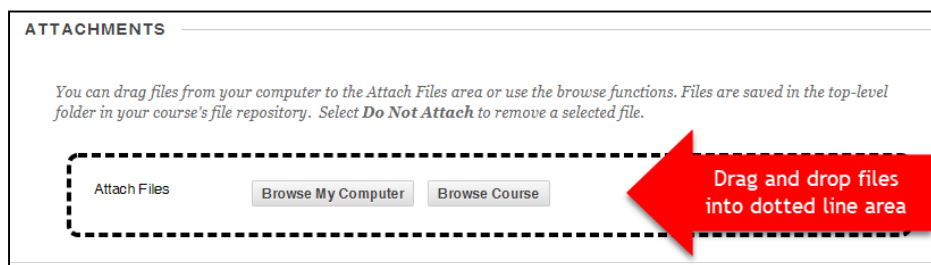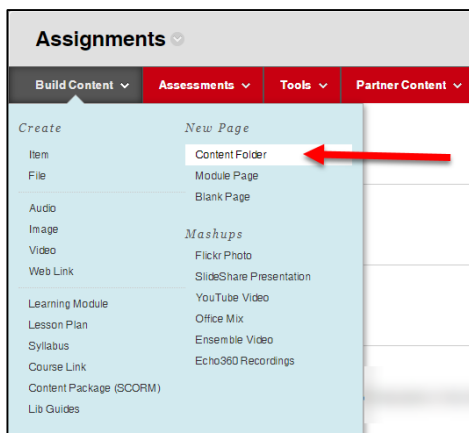

Drag and drop files into the dotted line area under Attachments
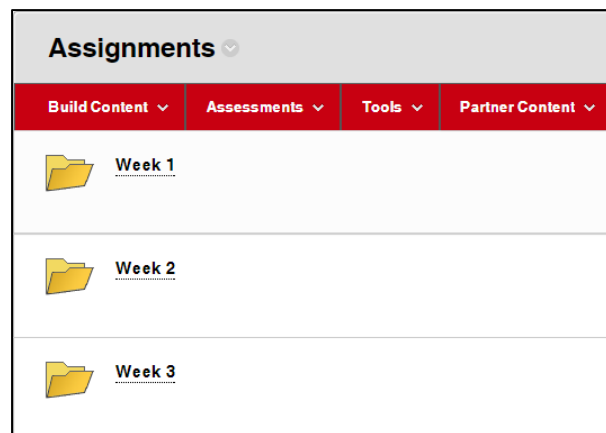
Content Folders

Folders can be used to help organize the course and make it easier for your students to find materials.

First create the Content Folder (under Build menu), then click on it to add materials (from inside).

Create Folder under Build Content

Build items under Content Folders

Course Files

The Files area of your course now has three places you can find content:

- Your current course/CRN (e.g. 35979-201740)
- All Courses Content (all courses you are listed as instructor)
- All Organizations Content (all organizations you are enrolled in)
  - Note: Organizations are not used at University of Hartford.

Instructors can update/overwrite files, clean up/remove and link to content from any of these three areas.

Using Course Files to Add Content to your Blackboard Course (lots of files)

If you plan to upload a lot of files to Blackboard, you want to use **Files,** also known as **Course Files**. Course Files is a central file repository for all the files in a course. 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: If you keep uploading the same file over and over again, you get duplicate files in Course Files. Be sure you clean up Course Files from time to time.
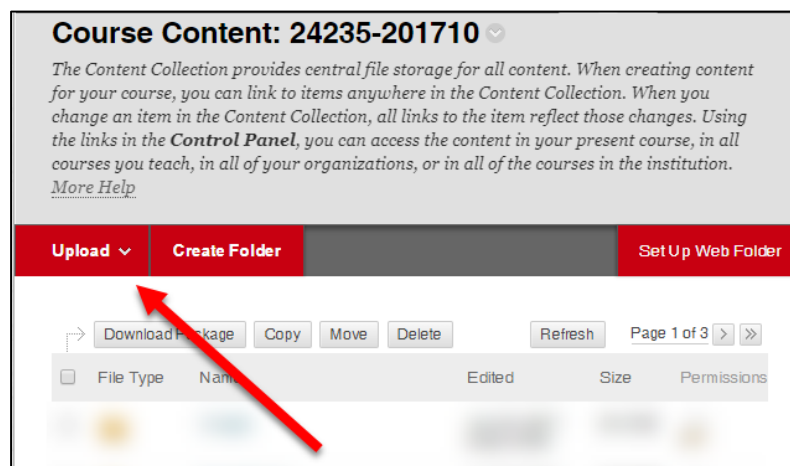
Upload button in Course Files

Uploading Many Files (to Course Files)

You can upload most types of files to Blackboard. Word, PDF, and Text files are easily opened by most students and maintain their format. To upload to *Course Files*, select one of the following options:

- Under Control Panel, click on **Files**.
- Click on the **Upload** button. You have several upload options:

- 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.
- If you would like to upload an individual file, select **Upload Files**, use the **Browse** button to select the file, and then click **Submit**.
- If you want to drag and drop files, select **Upload Files**, then **Multiple Files** (see below).

Drag and drop any files (or folders of files) that you would like to add to the course. Click **Submit** to upload the files.

Toggle between Single File or Multiple File Upload

Keep in mind that this is just a file storage area. 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.

Options for Adding Course Materials to Content Areas

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 you uploaded to *Course Files*.
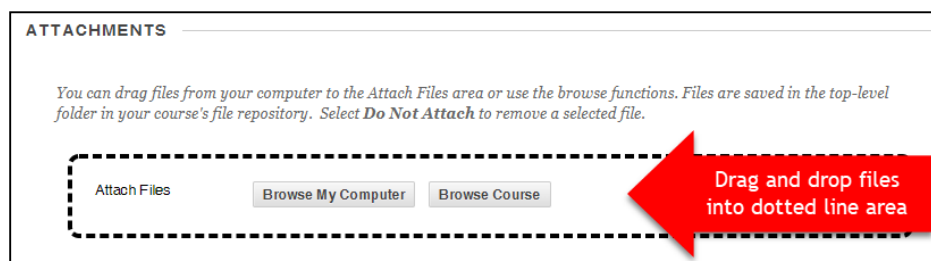
Click Browse Course to find files in Course Files area

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 immediately 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 down arrow, indicating a dropdown menu. Clicking this down arrow 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) or limit access to a few student names.

Adaptive Release Advanced – allows instructor to set up customized trigger rules.

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 students 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.
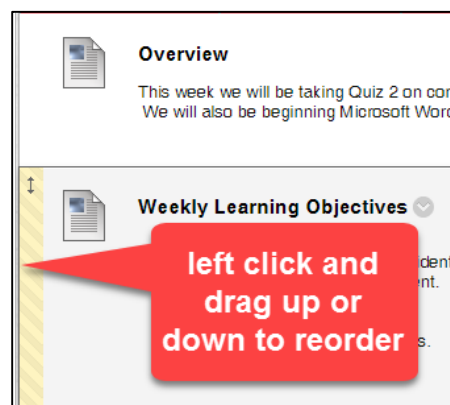
Delete – deletes the items from the course.
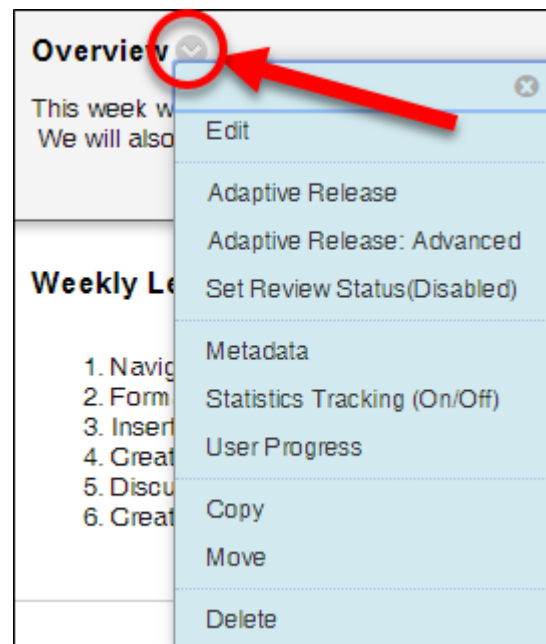
Reordering Course Content

Items within your course content areas can be reordered, or moved around by dragging and dropping.

- Find the item you want to move.
- Hover over the left side of it.
- Left click on the yellow bar with up/down arrows on the left and drag it up or down where you want it.

Other Tools for Building your Course

For instructions on how to set up and use each tool listed, use the **Blackboard Help for Instructors** found in your Blackboard course under Help in your Control Panel. Or, go to the FCLD website: https://www.hartford.edu/faculty-staff/faculty/fcld/default.aspx   and click on the menu item labeled **Instructions for Using 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

Build Content Menu

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

Weblink – 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 (SCORM) – used to add advanced, premade learning objects
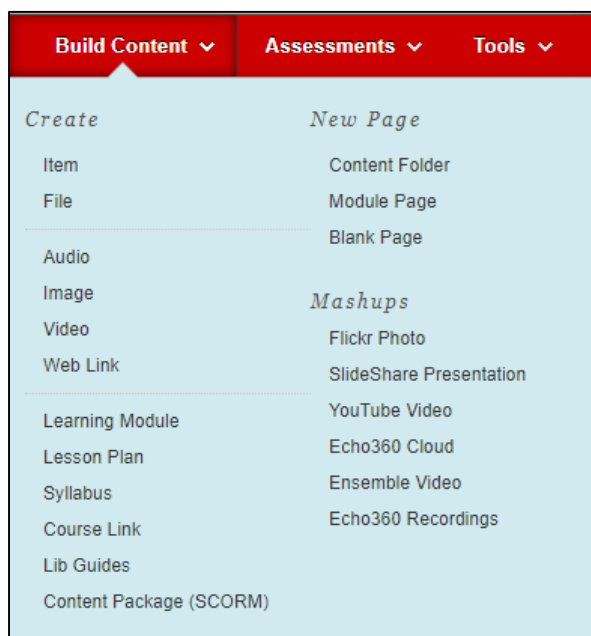
Content Folder – creates folders for content, used to organize course materials by week, content type, etc.

Module Page – creates a new module page, similar to the Alerts and Notifications page.

Blank Page – creates a blank page that you can create 'on the fly' (without uploading anything)

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

Ensemble Video – add steaming videos from the campus version of 'YouTube'

Echo360 Recordings – adds a placeholder folder for recordings made in Echo360 (older)

Echo306 Cloud – adds a placeholder folder for recordings made using the newer Echo360 Cloud interface

Assessments Menu

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 (Now includes options for *SafeAssign*, Blackboard's plagiarism detection tool within the *Submission Details* expanding block in the Assignment tool).

Self and Peer Assessment – create an assignment for students to peer-review.
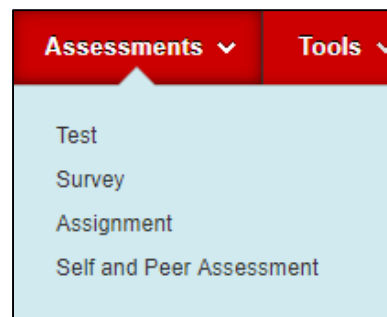
Tools Menu

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 (like Wikipedia).

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

Tools Area – provides students a link to all tools.
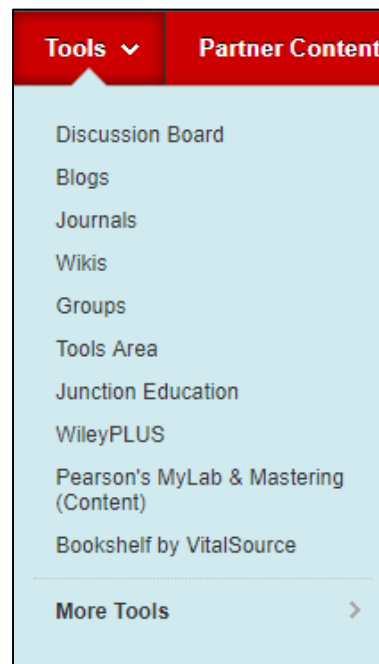
Junction Education – provides a link to the online textbooks provided by Junction Education.

WileyPLUS – provides a link to content from WileyPLUS.

Pearson's MyLab and Mastering (Content) – provides a link to content from Pearson.

Bookshelf by VitalSource – provides a link to content from VitalSource.

More Tools – lists other tools available to be linked within content areas.

Partner Content Menu

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.

Content Market – Allows instructors to enable publisher content such as: Blackboard Open Content, OpenEd, McGraw-Hill, Cengage, MacMillan, Wiley, and Pearson integrations if you are using their digital materials. Contact FCLD for assistance with enabling them within your course(s).
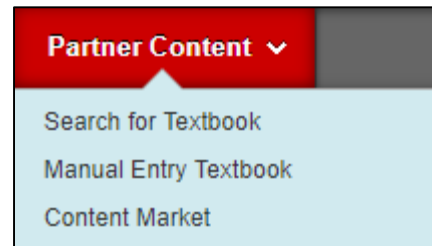
The Discussion Board

The Discussion Board is a great tool for allowing asynchronous, reflective communication. Discussion Boards allow students time to formulate a response, offer a safer communication arena for shy or ESL students, and can enhance face-to-face discussion that have taken place in class. They can also become a place for more informal discussion and sharing such as for introductions or a FAQ for the course. You, as an instructor and facilitator of the discussion board, are able to assess your students' grasp of the course content from their posts.

It's a best practice to establish guidelines such as appropriate use of the Discussion Board, provide a model for a good post, one which illustrates substantial vs. insubstantial posting, and let students know how often you expect them to post as well as how often they can expect you to participate in the discussion. Most instructors grade discussions in order to encourage student participation. It is possible to grade discussions right within Blackboard's Grade Center and typically, instructors use a rubric on which to grade discussion posts. If unfamiliar with rubrics, http://rubistar.4teachers.org is helpful or consult Rick King's "Discussion Rubric" sample, posted on the FCLD website. You can create rubrics using Blackboard's own rubric (or copy and paste from one in RubiStar).

Discussion Board Structure

Forum

A forum is made up of threads (topics) and replies to those threads. The forum description is used to explain guidelines for the discussion and describe the general topic.

Inside a Discussion Forum

Thread

Threads are added by students and instructors to start new topics. The instructor launches the discussion by posting an initial thread. The essential question that begins a discussion needs to be open-ended, thought-provoking, and deep enough to allow students to synthesize and analyze course content in their subsequent discussion.

Click the link to open the thread

Reading and Replying

Discussion participants use the *Reply* button to respond to the thread questions, or to reply to each other's replies. These replies are called 'posts'. Listed posts are indented, according to which post was being read when the reply button was used.

Click the Reply button to respond to others' posts

Setting up a Forum

Instructors can set up several forums each having its own topic or set up a forum that contains many topics by adding threads.   **Note:** Students cannot post to the Discussion Board until you set up a forum and/or add a thread.

To begin adding forums to the main discussion board in your course:

- In the menu of your course, click on the **Discussion Board** button in your course menu. (If you do not have a Discussion Board button, click on the **Tools** button instead and select the Discussion Board.)

- To add a Forum to the Discussion Board, select **Create Forum.** Provide a name and include a general description of the forum topic. If this is the first forum of the semester, you may want to include general instructions and guidelines for forum participation, such as how often to post or how long posts should be.

- Fill in forum settings. If you would like your students to be able to initiate conversations, be sure to click "Allow members to create new threads." Otherwise, students can only post to the discussion board if you post questions first. Click **Submit.**

- To force students to publish their own post prior to reading others, select *Participants Must Create…*

- Descriptions of the Forum Settings options are below:

    Viewing Threads/Replies – standard means anyone can post at any time. The second option may be used to prevent students from waiting until everyone else has posted before posting their own thread.

    Grade - allows instructor to grade the discussions and posts grade in the online Grade Center. **NOTE:** If you grade by thread, you may end up with many, many columns in your Grade Center.

    Subscribe – Allows participants to receive an e-mail notification when new posts are created.

Forum Settings

Create and Edit:

- **Allow Anonymous Posts** - Allows students to post without identifying themselves. Not recommended.

- **Allow Author to Delete Own Posts -** Allows students to delete messages they have posted. Before enabling this option, you may wish to consider how this might disrupt the flow of conversation (especially if you are grading posts).

- **Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts** – Allows students the ability to modify published posts; again, consider how this might alter the flow of conversation or grading.

- **Allow Members to Create New Threads** – Allows students to start a new topic.

- **Allow File Attachments** – Allows file attachments to be added.

- **Allow Users to Reply with Quote** – Includes original message text when replying to that message. It is not necessary to allow this as there is always a button available that allows anyone to see the text of the post they are replying to within the reply screen.

- **Force Moderation of Posts** – If this is selected, instructors must read all incoming posts, and then elect to reject or publish the post. This is not a recommended practice.

Additional Options:

- **Tagging -** Allows tags (keywords for searching later) to be added to messages on the forum after using *Collect*.

- **Allow Members to Rate Posts** – Allows students and instructors to insert a one-to-five star rating as a form of peer review.

Getting into the Forum

To monitor and facilitate the discussion board, enter the forum by clicking on the forum name.
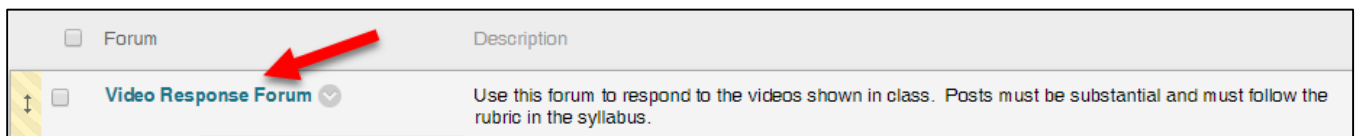

Entering a Forum by Clicking on Forum Name

Starting the Discussion

To start the discussion, click on **Create Thread**. Fill in the subject, then put in the starting comments and questions for your topic. A good discussion board question is one that gets the student to analyze and synthesize ideas, rather than simply summarizing a reading or restating facts.

Discussion View

Select **Expand All** if you wish to see an outline view of the discussion - posts are indented under the original message.
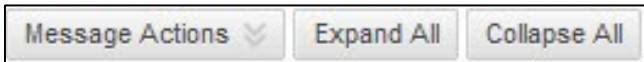
The Online Grade Center

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. If you elect to grade them, columns are also automatically added for journals, blogs, etc. 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 at 768-4661 or email fcld@hartford.edu or check our seminar schedule at http://www.hartford.edu/fcld.**

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.**
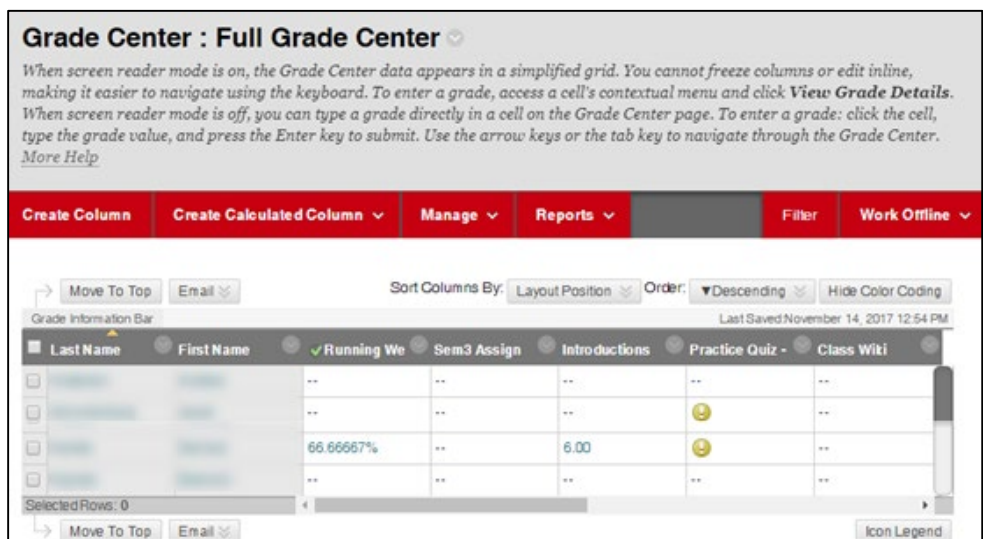
Blackboard Grade Center (Instructor's view)

Student View

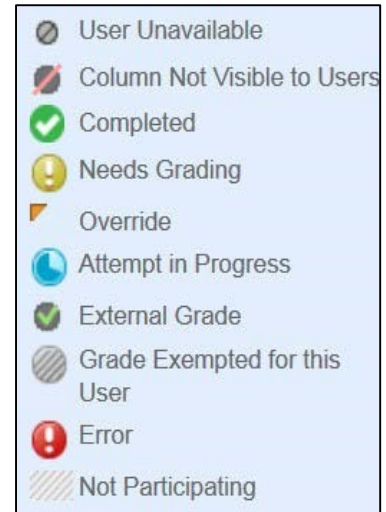Students access Grade Center by selecting **My Grades,** either from the Student Menu if the instructor included it separately, or from the **Tools** menu.

Reading the Grade Center – The Icon Legend

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

- Shows that the student has been blocked from the course.
- Instructor has selected the **No** option for "Show this column in My Grades."
- Complete/Incomplete is the grade value and it is showing as "completed'
- An item or portion of an item such as an essay needs to be viewed and graded.
- The grade has been modified via a manual edit.
- 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.
- A column can be viewed in a tab outside of Grade Center (not enabled).
- Instructors can exempt a student from a grade.
- Grade Center error.
- Student is not participating in this assignment (e.g., group discussion).

⊘	User Unavailable
✎	Column Not Visible to Users
✅	Completed
⚠	Needs Grading
▸	Override
🕐	Attempt in Progress
✅	External Grade
⊘	Grade Exempted for this User
❗	Error
▨	Not Participating

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:
 https://www.hartford.edu/faculty-staff/faculty/fcld/_files/getting-started-withgradecenter.pdf

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 by the automated drop/add function from the student information system, 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. Do **NOT** manually add or drop students.

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.
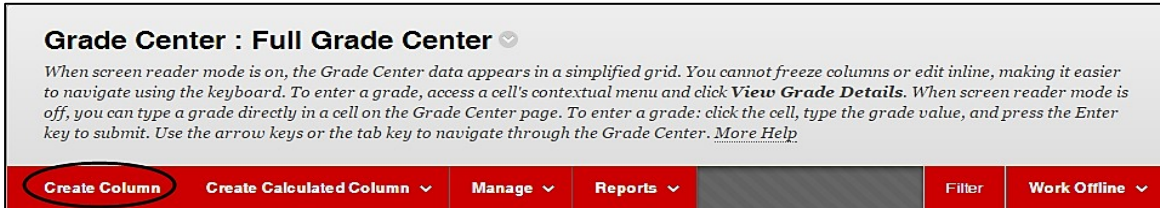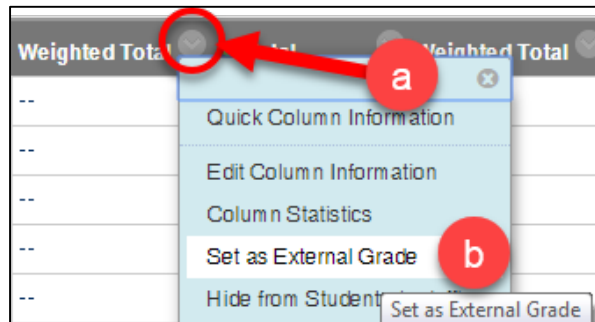

Select Create Column in Grade Center to Add Columns

Weighting Grades

After you have created your Grade Center columns, you are ready to weight the items. By default, your course should have two **Weighted Columns** and two **Total** columns. You will need to do a little cleanup maintenance first.

1. Click the down arrow next to **Weighted Total** and set to **External Grade.**

2. Delete the extra Weighted Total and Total columns by clicking the down arrow next to it, then click delete.

3. Edit the **Weighted Total** column by clicking the down arrow, then click **Edit Column Information**.
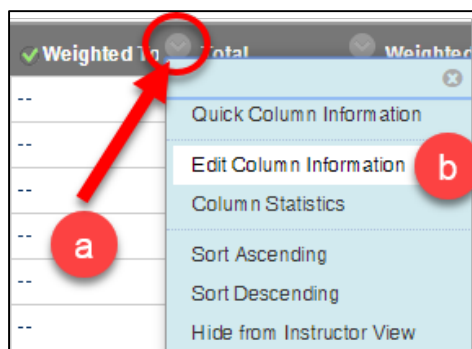
4. Assign weights to whichever columns you wish by either item or category or a combination of both. You can also choose to drop lowest grade or taking only the highest grade in a category, for instance.

Weighted Grades by Categories

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.
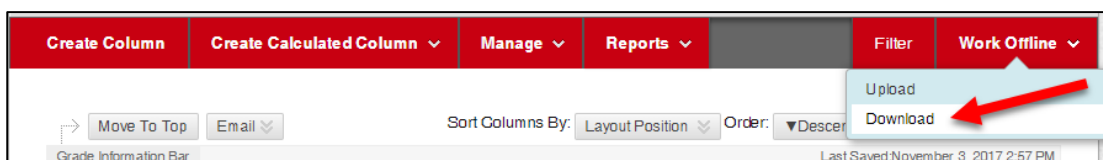
Click Work Offline, then Download

Blackboard Starter 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.
- ➤ 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 some 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. To do so:

Internet Explorer

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 Privacy.
3. Under Block Cookies select the option **"From third parties and advertisers."**
4. Close the Window.

Mozilla Firefox

Cookies are enabled by default in Firefox.

Google Chrome

1. Click the menu icon on the browser toolbar.
2. Select Settings.
3. Click the Show advanced settings.
4. Click Content Settings.
5. In the "Cookies" section of the dialog that appears, make sure Allow local data to be set is selected to allow both first-party and third-party cookies.
6. Click Done.

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

JavaScript is enabled by default in Firefox.

Supported Desktop Browsers for Blackboard Learn Q2 2018

Blackboard supports five primary browsers for Learn releases. Links to the vendor sites for the browsers are included in this topic.

Run the browser checker to see whether Blackboard Learn supports your browser.

To learn more about Blackboard's general browser support policy as well as information about JavaScript, Cookies, and other software, see the Browser Support Policy topic.

Desktop Browser	Supported Browser Versions
Chrome**	49+
Edge**	20+
Firefox	48+
Internet Explorer*	11+ (Windows only)
Safari	9+ (MacOS only)

*Microsoft ended active development for Internet Explorer in January 2016. Most features of Learn will work with IE11, so it is generally considered compatible. Some newer features in Learn may not. Reported issues isolated to Internet Explorer will not be resolved by Product Support. An alternative browser is recommended.

** Google Chrome versions 42+, Mozilla Firefox versions 52+, and Microsoft Edge do not support NPAPI-type plug-ins including Java plug-ins and many media browser plug-ins. Blackboard doesn't support these browsers for using embedded media types that require third-party NPAPI plug-ins for viewing.

Supported Mobile Browsers for Blackboard Learn Q2 2018

Mobile Browser	Supported Browser Versions
Chrome	49+
Edge	20+
Firefox	48+
Safari	iOS 7+

Note: Not all tools and workflows have been optimized for mobile use. Issues reported for tools that aren't yet optimized for mobile devices may be considered an enhancement request.

Blackboard App is a supported native app for mobile and tablet devices that interact with Blackboard Learn 9.1 servers. This app may have its own device requirements.

Tested Devices and Operating Systems

A variety of devices and operating systems were used to test the supported browsers. Support is not limited to these specific operating systems. The desktop browser versions above are supported regardless of the particular device or operating system on which they run.

Operating Systems used in testing	Windows 7, Windows 8, Windows 10, MacOS 10.11, MacOS 10.12, MacOS 10.13, Chrome OS
ChromeOS (ChromeBook) tested device	Chromebook (Chrome browser; features requiring NPAPI plug-ins are not supported)

Blackboard Learn does not require any other browser plugins. To learn more about browser plugins, assistive technology, and other supporting software, see the Browser Support Policy topic.

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