Blackboard Basics

Faculty Introduction
**BLACKBOARD LEARN**

*Blackboard Learn* is an application for online teaching, learning, community building, and knowledge sharing. Blackboard is open, flexible, and centered on student achievement. As you get started with Blackboard, you'll find that teaching online shares many similarities with teaching in the face-to-face (f2f) classroom.

Online learning can take place in a synchronous or asynchronous environment. In a synchronous environment, students and instructors have instantaneous or “real-time” interaction. Course members need to meet at a set time which can help students stay on track and manage their time. An example of a synchronous tool is *Blackboard Collaborate*. In Collaborate, your class can meet for a lecture. You can hold office hours and study sessions, have impromptu discussions, and host guest speakers.

In an asynchronous environment, interactions occur over extended periods of time, such as with discussions. Students can take the time to produce more reflective communication. Let students know how often you check communication tools, how often they'll hear from you, and when you're available to address questions and concerns.

Your experience and knowledge as a classroom instructor are invaluable when you teach online. You can use many of the tools in Blackboard to accomplish the tasks you're familiar with in the f2f setting:

- In the first few minutes of a f2f classroom, you might take a few minutes to remind students of upcoming events. In Blackboard, you can post messages to accomplish this same task.
- In your f2f classroom, you ask questions to check your students' understanding of the material. In Blackboard, you can ask questions in discussions, hold a Collaborate session, or ask them to take an ungraded quiz.
- Expectations must be clear for learners. Make dues dates, grading guidelines, and instructions easy to find.
**LOGIN**

You can access Blackboard through the Guttman portal at [my.guttman.cuny.edu](http://my.guttman.cuny.edu). Click on **Blackboard**, then use your CUNY credentials to login (CUNYfirst Username@login.cuny.edu and CUNYfirst password).

![Blackboard Login](image)

**MY BLACKBOARD**

**My Blackboard** and the global navigation menu are accessible by clicking the arrow next to your name in the page header. From this menu, you can access all your courses and personal settings.
My Blackboard Tools

- **Bb Home:** Provides an overview of the items that you need to grade and recent posts.

- **Posts:** Displays recent posts, comments, and replies from discussions, blogs, journals, and wikis in all your courses and organizations.

- **Updates:** View a list of notifications that alert you to important events and information in all your courses and organizations.

- **Retention Center:** Check the overall academic health of your courses in the main table and drill in to see who is struggling.

- **My Grades:** View your grades for each assignment, test, or activity in all of your courses.

- **Calendar:** Keep track of upcoming assignments, events, and other due dates.

- **Home:** [cuny.edu](http://cuny.edu)

- **Help:** Blackboard manuals, tutorials, and more.

CONTROL PANEL

The **Control Panel** is located in the left hand navigation area, under **Course Management**. This is where you can add and adjust course settings and functions. Use the arrows next to each link to expand or collapse the area.
COURSE MENU

The course menu appears on the left side of your course window and is the cornerstone for the organization and navigation of your course. You create links on the course menu to present tools and materials to users. The course menu appears in a list view, which displays only the top level of course materials.

1. Click the Add Menu Item icon above the course menu.

2. Select the type of content to create and enter a Name.

3. Select the Available to Users check box if you're ready for students to see it. You can create content ahead of time, hide the link, and then show the link at the appropriate time.

4. Click Submit. A link to the new content appears on the course menu.

The following types of content and tools can be added to the course menu:

- **Content area**: Content areas are the top-level course areas and hold all of your course materials. You create, link, and manage them on the course menu. After you create a content area, you add content to it, such as online lectures, multimedia, tests, and communication tools.

- **Module page**: A module page is a specialized content page that presents content in boxes, such as on a course home page.

- **Blank page**: You can include files, images, and text together on one page. With the editor, you have creative control over how your content appears and the flexibility to change the order and appearance when you want.

- **Tool link**: Create a link to an available tool in your course, such as the calendar or journals. You can also create a link to the tools page.

- **Web link**: You can link to an outside website or resource.

- **Course link**: You can create a shortcut to an item, tool, or area in your course for quick access to relevant materials.

- **Subheader**: A subheader is unlinked text. You can group related links below a subheader to help students find information.

- **Divider**: A divider is a line that visually divides the course menu into sections. After you create a divider, you can move it to another position.
Create an uncluttered course menu to maintain efficient navigation for your users. Try to limit the number of links included in the course menu. Use content areas to hold related items and give your course organization and structure. You can organize and rename the course menu links using the drag-and-drop function (1) or the keyboard accessible reordering tool (2). Open a link's menu and select **Rename Link** to change its title. Select **Hide Link** to make it unavailable to students. Select **Show Link** to make it available to students. If you **Delete** a content area, all content items within it are also permanently deleted (3). This action is final.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements are an ideal way to post time-sensitive information critical to course success. You can add, edit, and delete announcements from the Announcements page. Announcements appear in the order you post them, most recent first. To create an announcement:

1. On the Control Panel under Course Tools click Announcements.
2. Click Create Announcement on the action bar.
3. Type a Subject, which appears as the title of the announcement, and your Message.
4. Select the Email Announcement check box to send the announcement as an email to students (optional).
5. Click Submit.

COURSE BANNER

You can add a banner image to appear at the top of the course entry point. The banner image is automatically centered. A recommended size for banners is approximately 480 by 80 pixels. When you choose a banner image, keep in mind that users can resize their browser windows and use monitors of varying sizes and screen resolutions.

1. Under the Control Panel, click Customization.
2. Click the Teaching Style link.
3. Scroll down to Select Banner.
4. Click Browse My Computer and navigate to the saved image file that you want to upload.
5. Click the Open button.
CONTACT INFORMATION

Use the contacts tool to add profile information about yourself and other staff for students.

1. Under the course menu, click the Tools link. Then, click Contacts. You can also find this page by going to Control Panel > Course Tools > Contacts.
2. Click Create Contact.
3. Provide the necessary profile information.
4. Select Yes to make the profile available to students.
5. Click Submit.

Add a Contacts Link to the Course Menu

You can add a link on the course menu for instant access to the contacts tool.

1. Click the Add Menu Item button.
2. Select the Tool Link.
3. Type a Name for the link.
4. From the Type list, select Contacts.
5. Select the Available to Users check box.
6. Click Submit.
ADD A COURSE DOCUMENT

1. In a **Content Area**, select the area where you would like to add a document.

2. Click on the **Build Content** button.

3. Click on the **Item** link.

4. Type a **Name** for the item you are adding (required) and a **Description** in the text box (optional).

5. To add a document from your computer:
   a. Scroll down the page until you see **Attachments**.
   b. Click on the **Browse My Computer** button.
   c. Locate and select the file you would like to add and click the **Open** button.
   d. Click **Submit**.
ADD AN EXTERNAL LINK

1. Click the Add Menu Item button.
2. Select the Web Link.
3. Type a Name for the link.
4. Type or paste in a URL.
5. Select the Available to Users check box.
6. Click Submit.

CONTENT COLLECTION

1. Under the Control Panel, click Content Collection.
2. Click the course ID.
3. Click the Upload button.
4. Select Upload Files.
5. Click **Browse My Computer** to locate and select the files you would like to upload.

   ![Browse My Computer](image1)

6. Click **Submit**.

**MAKING YOUR BLACKBOARD COURSE AVAILABLE TO YOUR STUDENTS**

1. Under the **Control Panel**, click **Customization**.
2. Click **Properties**.
3. Under **Set Availability**, click **Yes** to make the course available.
4. Click **Submit**.

   ![Set Availability](image2)
RESOURCES

**Video: Global Navigation and My Blackboard** shows how to access My Blackboard and the user menu where you can receive information about all your courses and change personal settings.

**Video: Create Announcements** shows how to create an announcement.

**Video: How to Design Your Course Entry Point** explains how to set your course entry point page and add a banner image to it.

**Video: How to Make a Course Available to Students** shows you how to make your course available to students.