

# eMEDIA

**EDUCATIONAL MEDIA SERVICES**  
**Blackboard I – Basic Operations**  
in support of Faculty

## What is Blackboard?

Blackboard is a powerful course-management tool extending the face-to-face classroom or creating an online learning environment. Each course taught in a given semester has a “course shell” and each shell contains a left navigation menu, as well as other features, controlled by the instructor. A few of the features are discussion forums, assessment tools, a grade book, document sharing, e-mail messaging, and chats.

The instructor’s roadmap for moving in and around Blackboard is the Control Panel (shown below). This is the starting place to make any changes to a “course shell.” Course shells are accessed by visiting <http://technology.uaa.alaska.edu/blackboard/> and entering a UAA Username (the part before the [@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:uaa.alaska.edu)) and then a password (social security or employee # is default).

## The Blackboard 6.3 Control Panel

<b>Content Areas</b>		<b>User Management</b>	
<a href="#">Course Information</a>	<a href="#">Assignments</a>	<a href="#">List / Modify Users</a>	
<a href="#">Course Documents</a>	<a href="#">External Links</a>	<a href="#">Manage Groups</a>	
<b>Course Tools</b>		<b>Assessment</b>	
<a href="#">Announcements</a>	<a href="#">Manage Chalk Title</a>	<a href="#">Test Manager</a>	<a href="#">Gradebook</a>
<a href="#">Course Calendar</a>	<a href="#">ThomsonNOW Instructor Tools</a>	<a href="#">Survey Manager</a>	<a href="#">Gradebook Views</a>
<a href="#">Staff Information</a>	<a href="#">ThomsonNOW Gradebook</a>	<a href="#">Pool Manager</a>	<a href="#">Performance Dashboard</a>
<a href="#">Tasks</a>	<a href="#">Discussion Grader</a>	<a href="#">Course Statistics</a>	
<a href="#">Send Email</a>	<a href="#">Elluminate Live!</a>	<b>Help</b>	
<a href="#">Discussion Board</a>	<a href="#">Configure Wiki Tool</a>	<a href="#">Support</a>	
<a href="#">Collaboration</a>	<a href="#">Assess Wikis</a>	<a href="#">Manual</a>	
<a href="#">Digital Dropbox</a>	<a href="#">Manage Podcast</a>	<a href="#">Contact System Administrator</a>	
<a href="#">Glossary Manager</a>	<a href="#">Configure Blog Tool</a>		
<a href="#">Messages</a>	<a href="#">Course Health Check</a>		
<b>Course Options</b>			
<a href="#">Manage Course Menu</a>	<a href="#">Course Copy</a>		
<a href="#">Course Design</a>	<a href="#">Import Course Cartridge</a>		
<a href="#">Manage Tools</a>	<a href="#">Import Package</a>		
<a href="#">Settings</a>	<a href="#">Export Course</a>		
<a href="#">Recycle Course</a>	<a href="#">Archive Course</a>		

The least I need to know...

### 1) How do I log on?

- Visit the Blackboard web page <http://technology.uaa.alaska.edu/blackboard/>
- Enter your UAA Username (letters before the [@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:uaa.alaska.edu) of your UAA email)
- Enter your password (Default password is your social security number **or** UA ID 30-million number)

### 2) Where do I go to access the student roster for the course?

- Click on “Communications” on the course menu to the left
- Click on “Roster”
- Click on the “Search” button

### 3) Do I check my email messages from within Blackboard?

No. Blackboard allows you to *send* email to your students from within your shell. However, it does not allow you to collect or read that email via Blackboard. Email sent from Blackboard goes to each student's UAA email address and must be read by the student through his/her regular client-side email program or via UAA's Webmail (<http://webmail.uaa.alaska.edu>)

You can, however, use the Bb new 'messages' feature to send and receive messages, but you have to be inside of Bb to send/receive "email" of this type. There is no external access to the 'message' function within Bb. This tool is **NOT** recommended because of its limited access.

### 4) Can I access the class as a student?

Yes. Every faculty member has a "sample student" in each course (by default). Faculty members can log on as that sample student in order to see the course from a student's perspective (e.g., faculty members can take tests, view "My Grades," etc. just like their students would). Sometimes it is extremely helpful to know what students see in a course because that view is often different from what you as the instructor sees).

The convention below shows how to log on as a student:

- Username: yourusername\_student (EXAMPLE: afABC\_student)
- Password: yourUA\_ID\_number\_student (EXAMPLE: 30123456\_student)

**NOTE:** If you are unsure what your UA ID number is (also known as the Employee number), check the back of your Wolfcard, paycheck stub or call 907.786.4646, option 1, option 1.

## Basic Functions

### 1) How do I turn my course "on" for students?

Your course is not available to students until you make it available. By default all courses are turned "off." That means all your courses are unavailable to your students until you release them. This allows you to prepare the course until everything is arranged. To turn a course "on:"

- a) Enter the "Control Panel" of the course shell you want to make available
- b) Click the "Settings" link in the "Course Options" section (lower left)
- c) Click on "Course Availability"
- d) Click the radio button next to "Yes"
- e) Click "Submit"

### 2) How do I set up a content folder?

The instructions for this task can vary depending on how you rename your main navigation buttons/links. However, starting from your default settings, you would

- a) Enter the "Control Panel"
- b) Locate the "Content Area" of the control panel (upper left)
- c) Locate the "Content Area" where you want to add your folder to (e.g., "Course Documents") and click on the that link
- d) At the top of your screen, locate and click on the "Folder" button
- e) Give your folder a name by typing in a title into the blank textbox next to "Or specify your own name"
- f) Give your folder a description (this is optional), by typing text into the large textbox beneath the field for your folder's name. Leave the "Smart Text" default setting alone here
- g) Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the "Submit" button
- h) Click the "OK" button

- i) You will see your new folder on the page. Click on the “OK” button at the lower right of the screen to return to the control panel or click on the name of the folder to begin placing content

### **3) How do I put an item (such as my syllabus) inside a content folder?**

The instructions for this task can vary depending on how you rename your main navigation buttons/links. However, starting from your default settings, you would

- a) Enter the “Control Panel”
- b) Locate the Content Area (e.g., “Course Information,” “Course Documents,” etc.) and click on it
- c) At the top of your screen locate and click on the “Item” button
- d) Give your item a name by typing in a title into the blank textbox next to “Or specify your own name”
- e) Give your item a description (this is optional), by typing text into the large textbox beneath the field for your item's name. Leave the “Smart Text” default setting alone here
- f) If you want to attach a linked document, such as a syllabus, along with this item, scroll down the page, locate the “Browse” button, and click it to browse for the file. In the “Name of Link to File” field, type in text that students will click on to access the file (e.g., “Syllabus link”)
- g) Scroll to the bottom of the page and click the “Submit” button
- h) Click the “OK” button
- i) You should see the new item. Click on the “OK” button at the lower right of the screen to return to the control panel

### **4) How do I format the documents for Blackboard so all of my students can access them?**

To be assured that *all* students can read your files, you will need to save all your documents as either RTF, PDF or HTML files before loading them to Blackboard. If you save them as Word documents only Word will be able to open them.

#### **a) How do I save a document as either Rich Text Format or HTML?**

- Click “File” menu (upper left)
- Go to “Save As...”
- At the bottom of the dialog box, there is a “Save as type” field. Click on that and choose from the dropdown menu either “Rich Text Format” (for RTF) or “Web Page” (for HTML)
- Click “Save”

#### **b) How do I save a document as a PDF?**

This is a great format to use and will require installation of Acrobat Pro, which is free to all UAA faculty. Call UAA’s Call Center at 786.4646, option 1, option 1 or 877.633.3888, option 1, option 1 for assistance in downloading this and creating a PDF document.

## **Blackboard Tools**

### **1) How do I set up a discussion forum?**

The instructions for this task can vary depending on how you rename your main navigation buttons/links. However, starting from your default settings, you would:

- a) Click on “Communications” on the course menu to the left or, if you have a “Discussion Board” link available to you, click on that link (skip step 2)
- b) Click on the “Discussion Boards” link
- c) Click on the “Add Forum” button (upper left)
- d) Give your discussion a title and a description, such as “Week 1, DQ #1”
- e) Next, check the settings for this particular forum. These settings may be changed and modified as needed
- f) Scroll to the bottom and click “Submit” (lower right)

- g) You will see your new forum. Since students are often reluctant to post the first message to a forum, a best practice is to do so for them. Click on the name of the forum (e.g. W1, DQ #1) to enter it
- h) Once inside the forum, click on the “Add New Thread” button in the upper left of your screen
- i) In the message form that appears, fill out the subject line and type your forum message in the large textbox. If you set-up your discussion questions on the front page of the discussion forum, then you can simply copy and paste it in the new thread.
- j) Scroll to the bottom of the page and click the “Submit” button
- k) Click the “OK” button to return to the forum level of the discussion board

## 2) How do I respond to a message in the discussion forum?

- a) Enter the forum where you wish to reply by clicking on the name of the forum
- b) Click on the subject line of the message you want to read and respond. You have to open the message **first**. You cannot respond to a message unless it is open on the page on your screen
- c) The message should now be visible on your screen; locate and click the “Reply” button
- d) In the message form that appears, you can either leave the subject as is or fill out the subject line and then type your response in the open textbox
- e) When finished, scroll to the bottom of the page and click the “Submit” button

## 3) How do I view multiple messages on a page without having to individually open each message?

- a) Enter the discussion forum where you wish to view multiple messages
- b) Locate the small “Expand All” link in the upper right of the page that appears and click on it
- c) You should see an expanded menu of icons appear at the top of your forum. Some of these are “Select All,” “Unselect,” “Invert,” etc.
- d) Click on the “Select All” icon (or, alternatively, manually place a check mark in the empty box next to each message you want to read)
- e) Now click on the “Collect” icon. What you will see is a long list of all the messages open and available for reading on the page

**NOTE:** Attachments to messages cannot be clicked on and opened when messages are viewed in this fashion. If you want to be able to open up files that are attached, then you need to view those messages individually in the traditional manner.

## Customizing & Navigating the Menu

### 1) How do I custom name a main navigation menu link?

- a) Click on “Control Panel”
- b) Click on “Manage Course Menu” in the “Course Options” section (lower left)
- c) You will now see a list of all the main navigation links that are in the left-navigation menu. To change the name of one of them, click the “Modify” button adjacent to the extreme right of the link you wish rename
- d) In the new screen that appears, type the customized name for that link into the blank field next to the “Area name:” prompt. **NOTE:** The name should not be longer than 18 characters
- e) Click the “Submit” button
- f) After the “Receipt: Success” screen appears, click the “OK” button

**NOTE:** Clicking “OK” following the “Receipt: Success” screen returns you to the control panel.

### 2) How do I hide some of the links from students until they are needed?

- a) Click on “Control Panel”
- b) Click on “Manage Course Menu” in the “Course Options” section (lower left)

- c) You will now see a list of all the main navigation links. To hide one of the links from students (make “invisible” to students), click the “Modify” button to the extreme right of the link that you wish to hide
- d) Uncheck the box next to the “Make available for students/participants” statement
- e) Click on the “Submit” button

**NOTE:** This specific content area is now invisible to students (invisible from the preview screen) but available and visible to faculty. You can use this while you are creating content, before you are ready for students to see the content or to limit student access to material before or after you care to present the information.

### **3) How do I remove a main navigation menu link?**

- a) Click on “Control Panel”
- b) Click on “Manage Course Menu” in the “Course Options” section (lower left)
- c) You will now see a list of all the main navigation links. To delete one of them, click on the “Remove” button to the extreme right of the link that you wish to delete.

### **4) How do I add a new “Content” button to the main navigation menu?**

To add a new content area link to your menu (an additional place where documents, handouts, and presentations, etc., can be loaded):

- a) Click on “Control Panel”
- b) Click on “Manage Course Menu” in the “Course Options” section (lower left)
- c) You will now see a list of all the main navigation links and a series of buttons along the top
- d) Click the “Content Area” button
- e) In the screen that appears, name the new content area link by either choosing an option from the drop-down menu provided or by typing your own name into the “Area name” field
- f) Click the “Submit” button

### **5) How do I add a “Tools” button to the main navigation menu of my course?**

To add a new tools link to your menu (that is, to make an “Email” or some tool link from the menu):

- a) Click on “Control Panel”
- b) Click on “Manage Course Menu” in the “Course Options” section (lower left)
- c) You will now see a list of all the main navigation links and a series of buttons along the top
- d) Click the “Tool Area” button
- e) In the screen that appears, select the type of tool link you want to add to the menu by selecting an option from the “Area Type” dropdown menu
- f) Name your new button by typing in the “Area name” field
- g) Click the “Submit” button

### **6) How do I add an “Course Link” to the main navigation menu of my course?**

Adding a course link can help assure that students go to the exact area of the shell you wish – it can help to “connect the dots,” so to speak, for students.

- a) Click on “Control Panel”
- b) Click on “Manage Course Menu” in the “Course Options” section (lower left)
- c) You will now see a list of all the main navigation links and a series of buttons along the top
- d) Click the “Course Link” button
- e) In the screen that appears, name the new link by typing in the “Area name” field
- f) Click the “Browse” button to find the exact place (in your course) where you want this new button to link. A small course map window will pop up. **NOTE:** This may take a minute or so

- g) Click on the + and – signs (if they are there) to reveal the specific area, folder, or learning unit where you want point your course link
- h) Once this area is revealed, click on the content area, document, quiz, etc., that you want to link
- i) Click the “Submit” button (bottom of the course map)
- j) Scroll to the bottom of the page and click the “Submit” button
- k) After the “Receipt: Success” screen appears, click the “OK” button

**NOTE:** Clicking “OK” following the “Receipt: Success” screen returns you to the control panel.

### **7) How do I add an “External Link” to the main navigation panel of my course?**

- a) Click on “Control Panel”
- b) Click on “Manage Course Menu” in the “Course Options” section (lower left)
- c) You will now see a list of all the main navigation links and a series of buttons along the top
- d) Click the “External Link” button
- e) In the screen that appears, name the new link by typing in the “Area name” field
- f) In the “Target” field, type the complete URL for the website (with the “http://”). You can also copy and paste this from a URL field in any browser
- g) Select the “Launch in new window” option to make it easier to view links
- h) Click the “Submit” button

## **Easy Cosmetic Changes**

### **1) How do I make buttons appear on my course menu?**

Blackboard allows faculty to decide whether they want their main navigation menu to have buttons or links. Links take up less space on the page, however buttons are sometimes more visible to students. To change the menu to buttons:

- a) Click on “Control Panel”
- b) Click on “Course Design” in the “Course Options” section (lower left)
- c) Click on “Course Menu Design”
- d) In the screen that appears, select “Buttons”
- e) Click the “Submit” button

### **2) How do I change the colors and design in my course menu?**

- a) Click on “Control Panel”
- b) Click on “Course Design” in the “Course Options” section (lower left)
- c) Click on “Course Menu Design”
- d) Underneath the “Buttons or Text” option, there are additional options to modify the color of your buttons (if you chose “Button” for your main navigation panel) or the background color and text color for your text links (if you chose “Text” for your main navigation panel)
- e) Make your selections
- f) Click the “Submit” button

### **3) How do I make the text on my navigation buttons a different color?**

Available in earlier versions of Blackboard, this feature no longer works in the current version.

### **4) How do I add a banner to my course?**

- a) Click on “Control Panel”
- b) Click on “Course Design” in the “Course Options” section (lower left)
- c) Click on “Course Banner” (fourth in the list)
- d) Click on the “Browse” button to locate your banner
- e) Once your image is loaded, click the “Submit” button