

Getting Started with Blackboard

Blackboard Learn is UAlbany's Learning Management System. Blackboard has many features which allow faculty to upload files and organize course content, communicate with students and assign/grade assessments easily. Login to blackboard with your UAlbany NetID and Password at <https://blackboard.albany.edu>.



Blackboard

Blackboard Essentials

A Blackboard course is created automatically for ALL sections on the Schedule of Classes and/or enrolled course sections. Courses are displayed under the “My Courses” block on the Blackboard **Academics** tab. Tips for finding your courses: [Manage your Blackboard course list](#).

Before your course begins

These resources help guide you through common course start-up tasks.

- [Make your course available \(video\)](#)
REQUIRED for student access.
- [Combine multiple sections into one course \(merge rosters\)](#)
- [Copy your prior semester course](#)
- [How to connect your course to electronic reserves](#)
- [How to enroll TA and co-instructors](#)

Navigating a Blackboard Course (UAlbany [Standard Course Template](#))

The screenshot shows the Blackboard course interface. Five red circles with white letters A through E highlight specific features:

- A:** The user profile and navigation tabs (Academics, Community, Content) at the top right.
- B:** The 'Student Preview' icon (a person with a magnifying glass) in the top right toolbar.
- C:** The 'Course Menu' on the left sidebar, including Announcements, Course Content, and My Grades.
- D:** The 'Course Content' area, showing a folder for 'Presentation 1: Navigate Blackboard Interface' and its learning outcomes.
- E:** The 'Control Panel' at the bottom left of the course content area.

- Edit Mode:** ON for course editing/management; OFF for “student view” simulation.
- Student Preview:** Exact student experience. Ability to interact and submit assessments.
- Course Menu:** Foundation for course organization and navigation.
- Course Content:** Area where course content is created and stored.
- Control Panel:** Access point for course management, tools, and users

Working with the Course Menu

This menu appears on the left side of the screen and is focal point for navigation and organization with a course. From the [course menu](#) you:

- Create links to tools and course materials.
- Customize appearance and organize links.



Course Template

To assist in development, a course template is applied to all courses. It allows the flexibility to customize a course, while leveraging the essential components of Blackboard. It is part of the Course Menu and Includes:

- **Announcements:** Spot to create class wide communications.
- **Course Content:** Where to build your course.
- **My Grades:** Where students receive feedback on their assessments.
- **Campus Resources:** Links to different resources available to students.
- **Research Guides:** University Libraries research resources.
- **Blackboard Help:** Students and Faculty, Browser check.
- **Faculty Resources:** How to ready your course and resources for success. Refer to [Before your course begins](#) and [Help Resources](#).

Organizing a Course

There are a few basic ways to organize materials within a course content area. A **Content Folder** or a **Learning Module**.

	A Learning Module has a table of contents.
	A Content Folder does not.

Adding Course Content

After choosing a Module or a Content Folder it is time to start adding content. There are many ways to create content. Here is a full list of [Blackboard content building tools](#) and some [best practices](#).

Item

Used to present a combination of content:

- Full functionality of the text editor.
- Attach files.
- Everything presented together.

File

Used to create a link to file(s):

- Add meaningful descriptions.
- Choose how students view file.
- Allows for a compact look to a course.

Web Link

A link to a website or outside resource.

Course Link

Shortcut to anything within a course.

Syllabus

Two options for syllabus creation:

- Attach a file.
- Build a course syllabus through a series of steps.

Mashups

Used to add media content directly into course:

- Flickr Photo.
- YouTube Video.
- Slide Share.
- Ensemble Video.

Adding Interaction Tools

These tools help foster contact between students, instructors and course content within Blackboard. A [complete list of interactive tools](#) and a set of [interaction best practices](#).

Announcements

Space to communicate with all students on your roster about time sensitive course wide subjects. Typically used for:

- Due dates, schedules.
- Changes or clarification of content.
- [How to Create Announcements](#).

Email

Allows sending of external emails to users or groups of users within the course:

- No need to use outside email application.
- Blackboard does not keep copies of emails.
- A great resource on [using email](#).

Messages

Course based communication tool:

- Must be logged into course to view.
- Based on course enrollment.
- How to use [course messages](#).

Discussions

Essential component in an online class:

- Asynchronous – can happen anytime and anywhere.
- Build Community and Social Presence.
- Richer and more thought provoking.

This resource offers a [complete overview of Blackboard Discussions](#).

Adding Assessment Tools

Blackboard provides a multitude of ways to assess learners. Outlined are selected tools.

Tests, Pools and Surveys

Used to measure student progress, knowledge or just gather information:

- Create, Deploy, Students Submit, Grade, Students review.
- Depending on question settings tests can grade themselves.
- Wired connection advised for taking tests.
- Details on [tests, pools and surveys](#).

Groups

Used to aid in student interaction:

- Helps to foster relationships with peers.
- Good to use in large classes.
- Increases critical thinking skills.
- A complete overview of [using groups in Blackboard](#).

Blogs

Used as a personal, shared online space:

- Allow for commenting.
- Great social learning tools.
- Explore how to [use blogs](#) in your course.

Journals

A private space for self-reflection and communication with the instructor:

- Safe space to explore ideas, opinions or concerns about course content.
- Discuss problems faced and solutions.
- Examine [using Journals](#).

Wikis

Interactive space that allows multiple users to edit and contribute:

- Great for group work.
- Sharing and Collaboration.
- [Wikis](#) are a multifaceted tool and can be used throughout the course.

Assignments

Used as a space for students to submit course work to be evaluated:

- Grade center column automatically created.
- Use SafeAssign to check for plagiarism.
- Attach a rubric for evaluation.
- More information on [assignments in Blackboard](#) including Self and Peer Assessment.

Grading in Blackboard

The [Grade Center](#) in blackboard is a powerful tool that assists instructors in tracking of student performance. It organizes submissions, allows for easy grading and calculates grades.

- Explore how to [navigate the Grade Center](#).
- Learn about the [three different types of grade columns](#).
- All about [grading tasks](#).
- How to [create and associate rubrics](#) with course content.
- Create and access [grade reports and statistics](#).

Additional Supported Resources

There are tools that we support to assist with the teaching of your course. It is suggested that you contact [Educational Technology Services](#) if you need help with implementation of these tools.

- [Voicethread](#): Is a "multimedia discussion board" that enables interaction with course content.
- [Ensemble Video](#): A video streaming platform for your courses.
- [Top Hat](#): Has an InteractiveText platform that lets faculty adopt, customize or create content.
- [Respondus](#): Software that creates quizzes and assessments offline for upload to Blackboard.
- [Skype for business](#): Includes several communication and collaboration features.
- [OneDrive](#): Cloud based files application that allows sharing and collaboration from anywhere.

Help Resources

Looking for more guidance on teaching online? Explore these links:

- [Blackboard Learn Help for Instructors](#).
- [Blackboard On-Demand Learning Center](#).
- [University at Albany AskIT knowledge base](#).
- [University at Albany Blackboard Policies](#).
- [Educational Technology Workshops at UAlbany](#).
- [University at Albany Teach Online](#).
- [Make an appointment for Teaching Online consultation](#).