

CASE

-STUDENT QUICK START GUIDE TO BLACKBOARD-

Introduction to Blackboard

What is Blackboard? What can Blackboard do for you?

Blackboard is an example of a course management system, that allows faculty members to put course materials, links, and quizzes onto the World Wide Web. In addition, Blackboard includes a number of communication tools, including discussion boards, chat and whiteboards, and email. Blackboard can also provide groups or organizations a place to share documents and information. In other words, faculty, staff, and students can use Blackboard as an online, web-based organizer accessible from any computer.

Blackboard instructions are available online at <http://www.case.edu/its/itac/blackboard/stuquickstart.html>. The instructions provide a basic introduction to some of the main features of Blackboard. For more complete details regarding specific communication tools (e-mail, discussion board, virtual classroom, etc.) see <http://www.case.edu/its/itac/blackboard/communication.html>.

Logging In

Logging into Blackboard is as easy as logging in to your Case email. You will use your network ID and password. If you do not have an active network ID you must first activate your account.

If you wish to activate your network ID:

<https://its-services.case.edu/my-case-identity/activate/>

If you wish to reset your network password:

<https://its-services.case.edu/my-case-identity/password/reset/>

To log into Blackboard:

1. Go to <http://blackboard.case.edu> and click on the User **Login** button.
2. You will be directed to the Case Single Sign On Page; enter your user name and password. You will be taken to the My Institution page.
3. If you have any questions or problems, see the FAQ at <http://www.case.edu/its/itac/blackboard/FAQ.html>

My Institution

My Institution is a place to keep track of course announcements, personal tasks, and assignments. It lists any courses you are taking that have Blackboard course sites. You can also send email, view your grades, search the user directory, search for text within your courses, and edit your personal information.

To change your personal information, click on **Personal Information** under **Tools** at the left. You may **Edit Personal Information, Set CD-ROM Drive, Set Privacy Options, Set Visual Text Box Editor Options** and **Set Language Pack**. Choose one, and fill in the appropriate fields on the screen. Click **Submit** to complete the process.

Note: You cannot change your password from the Personal Information screen. Personal information that you edit or supply to Blackboard will only be available on Blackboard. It will not affect your records with the University Registrar. Additionally, it is not recommended that you post your Social Security Number in the **Student ID** field.

Windows Vista Users Note: Many Vista users have reported that the Visual Text Box editor does not function properly. If you are experiencing this issue, you should choose **Set Visual Text Box Editor Options** from the **Personal Information** screen. On the next screen, set the availability to **Unavailable**. Click **Submit**.

Blackboard provides **Tasks** and a **Calendar**; both are located on the My Institution page under **Tools**. Tasks are dated, prioritized activities that you want to remember. Your professors may also add Tasks to your list for the courses in which you are enrolled. The Calendar contains both personal and course-related events. The steps for adding Tasks and Calendar events are very similar. Click on **Tasks** to view the list of tasks, or **Calendar** to view the list of calendar events. Click on **Add Task** to add a task, or **Add Event** to add a calendar event. Fill in the information and submit. The new task or event will appear on the list. You can personalize how you view your My Institution page by clicking on the **Content** and **Colors** buttons on the upper right.

See <http://www.case.edu/its/itac/blackboard/calendar.html> for more information about the Calendar, and <http://www.case.edu/its/itac/blackboard/tasks.html> for more information about Tasks.

[Sending E-mail](#)

To send e-mail through Blackboard, click **Send E-mail** under My Institution. From within Blackboard, you may send messages to professors and other students in your Blackboard classes. Clicking on the selected course will take you to a page listing potential e-mail recipients: E-mail All Users, All Groups, All Teaching Assistants, All Instructors, Select Users, and Select Groups. E-mail messages sent from Blackboard go to the recipient's Case email account. To check for email messages, use your regular e-mail program since you cannot check your mail through Blackboard.

See <http://www.case.edu/its/itac/blackboard/sendmail.html> for more information about sending e-mail.

[Searching the User Directory](#)

To search for someone's e-mail address, use the **User Directory** located on the **My Institution** page under **Tools**. There are various methods for looking up users through Blackboard. By clicking on the **Search** tab one can search by last name, username and email. The **Starts With** tab allows user to search by the first few letters of the last name. A reliable search method is to search the alphabetical list of users by their last name. If all the names will not fit onto one page, click through the pages to find the name.

Not all Blackboard users appear in the directory. In most cases the available information includes the person's name and e-mail address. Additional information may appear depending on how each user sets up his/her Personal Information and Privacy Options. In order for people to appear in the directory, they must do the following:

- Under **My Institution** click on **Personal Information** under **Tools**.
- Click **Set Privacy Options**.
- Under **User Directory Status**, check the box next to **Make information available to public**.
- Under **Contact Information** choose the items you want displayed in the directory.
- Click **Submit**.

[My Courses](#)

Your professors must "enroll" you in the Blackboard version of all your classes. If your professor tells you that the class will be using Blackboard but you don't see the class listed under My Institution, then s/he may have forgotten to mark the site as "available" or to add some of the students to the site. Contact your instructor about this. If your professor is not using Blackboard for the class, you will not have a course site listed for that class. Again, check with your professor if you are unsure about whether a class should have a Blackboard site. If you log in and see course

sites from last semester, inform your professor that the site is still visible. S/he can then mark it as unavailable to students or can remove last semester's students.

[Sending & Receiving Files](#)

Blackboard has several tools that enable instructors and students to exchange files. Users can send and receive files of any type, including web pages, Word or WordPerfect files, text files, PDFs, etc. Students can send files, like homework assignments, to their instructors, who can view and return them. Ordinarily, students will send files only to their professor, but files can be shared among students within the same course workgroup, if the instructor creates groups for them.

[Submitting Files: The Assignment Manager](#)

1. Enter the course website
2. Go to the relevant content area (Assignments, Course Documents, etc.)
3. Look for the relevant assignment. You will see a description of the assignment along with a link that looks like this: >> [View/Complete Assignment: Assignment Name](#)
4. Click on the Assignment link.
 - You will see Assignment Information, including the **Name** of the assignment and any **Instructions** and **Assignment Files** needed to complete it.
 - You will see a space for **Comments**. Here you can enter any comments about your assignment that you want to send to your instructor
 - You will see a space in which you can **Attach a local file**. Use the **Browse** button to search your computer for the files that you will turn in. If you have more than one file to turn in, you can attach multiple files.
5. When you have entered your comments and added your assignment files, you can either **Save** or **Submit** your work. If you are not ready to send your work to your instructor, you can **Save** it and return to it later. If you are ready to send the files to your instructor, click **Submit**.

Note: If you do not **Submit** the file, your instructor will **not** receive it and you cannot be graded on it.

6. Once you have submitted your assignment, clicking on the link again will yield this message: "This assignment is complete. Click **OK** to review the result." Clicking OK will bring up a page with the same Assignment Information as before, as well as your comments (under Assignment Materials) and your uploaded files.
7. This is also where you can see the **Feedback from Instructor**, including your **Grade**, any **Comments** on your work, and any additional **Files from Instructor**.
8. You can also view your grade and instructor's feedback to you by going to the Tools menu and selecting **My Grades**. From your grades, you can click on any bold and underlined grade to see more information.

[Using the Group File Exchange](#)

The Groups pages File Exchange works just like the course Digital Drop Box. The Digital Drop Box only permits files to be exchanged between instructor and student. However, the Group File Exchange permits student Group members to send each other files. To see what files other members have sent you, look in the File Exchange on your Group Page. For this feature to be available, your instructor must elect to establish groups as well as provide them with group areas within the course site.

1. Click on the **Groups** button or click on the **Communications** button and then choose **Group Pages**. You will see all of the groups that exist for the course, with the name of the group as a link, and a description of the group.
2. Click on the name of a Group to which you belong. Only groups to which you belong will have links.
3. When you enter the group page, the Tools available to the group will be listed at the top of the screen. The names of the members and their e-mail addresses will appear toward the bottom of the screen. The Group File Exchange is available if the link **File Exchange** is listed. Click it to enter the exchange.
4. You will see the **Add File** button and list of current files.
5. To add a file to the exchange, click the **Add File** button. **Browse** for the file on your local machine, and if you wish, you may provide a name for the file. The specified name will be the text of the link for the file, instead of the actual filename.
6. To view a file in the File Exchange, click on the link name. The file should open in the appropriate application (e.g. Microsoft Word, NotePad).
7. To save a file, right-click on the link. Choose **Save Target As...** You will be prompted to save or open the file; decide on a location to save the file on your computer.

Deleting Files from the File Exchange

1. To delete files, click on the **Remove** button next to the file(s) you want to delete.
2. You will be prompted to confirm the deletion.
3. Click **OK** and the deleted files will no longer appear **to you or anybody else in the group**.

Gradebook

Your instructor may be using Blackboard to provide you privately with your grades. You may check your grades from the **My Institution** page by clicking **View Grades** within the **Tools** box. Choose the course for which you would like your grades. You can also check your grades by entering the course site which corresponds to the pertinent class; click **Tools** on the left hand navigation menu, and then choose **My Grades**. If you would like more detail on a particular Gradebook item, you may click the score of the pertinent item. Depending on the type of Gradebook entry, you may be able to see records of multiple assessment attempts, comments from your instructor, submitted files, etc.

Discussion Boards

Discussion Boards provide a way of exchanging information and discussing course materials in a format which allows the archiving of old messages, searching, and threading. When a professor sets up a discussion board for a class, you can find it by going to the Blackboard site for that class and, usually, clicking on the **Communication** or **Discussion Board** button. If you have trouble finding a discussion board, ask your professor where it is. From the Discussion Board menu, you will see a list of available discussions, called forums. The forum list will tell you how many messages there are in the forum, how many messages are new, and how many people have posted in the forum. Click on the name of the forum you want to contribute to.

Navigating the Forum

The information on the screen is organized under several headers: the thread name, the author, the date the thread was created, how many posts are within the thread, and how many are unread. Click on the name of a thread to read the messages. Sort messages by date, author, or thread name by clicking on the arrow directly above the column header you would like to use as sorting criteria.

To simplify viewing, you can also search for a specific thread by using either date restrictions to narrow your results, or by using keywords. These searches may be performed within the current forum, the current discussion board, or all forums within the course. You can also use the **Display** menu to restrict the listed threads to all posts, published posts, locked posts or hidden posts. If you would like to collect a number of threads together for easy viewing or for printing, you can do so using the checkboxes next to each thread. Once you have checked all the threads you would like to collect, you can view them at once by clicking the **Collect** button. The collected threads will be displayed in their entirety in a format that is simplified for easy viewing or printing.

Reading and Replying to a Thread

If you would like to read replies to a particular thread, simply click the thread name. On the **Thread Detail** screen you will see the thread as well as any replies. The first box permits you to search by date or keyword within the currently selected thread, as well as within the current forum, the current discussion board, or all forums within the course. The second box, marked **Thread**, shows the hierarchy of posts within the current thread. The third box, marked **Subject**, shows the currently selected post. You may reply to a post by clicking it within the **Thread** box, and then clicking the **Reply** button in the upper or lower right corner of the **Subject** box. To modify a post you have made, select it by clicking it in the **Thread** box, and clicking **Modify** in the **Subject** box.

When using the reply/new message window, simply type your response. It can be plain text or it can contain HTML. Depending on how the instructor set up the board, you may be allowed to send an attachment with the message. Click **Show Original Post** to see the original message to which you are responding. When you are composing the message, click **Save** if you wish to return to your message before posting it, or **Submit** to post it to the Discussion Board.

Searching for a message or author

When you first enter a Discussion Board, the Search field can be found at the upper right of the Discussion Board page. The Search option allows you to search by keyword or author within All Forums in the Course or in the Current Discussion Board, limited by date if you choose. Click **Go** when you've entered your search criteria.

Your Search results can be sorted by Author, Date, Subject, and Thread. You can also filter your search by author and status.

Blog

The Blog tool can provide a private, semi-private, or public display of writing from individual users within a course, depending on how an instructor sets up the tool. Each course site has a Blog available by default within the **Tools** menu. Your instructor may choose to use this Blog, or perhaps create a new Blog within one of the course content areas. Your instructor may ask you to post to the Blog simply for the sake of class discussion or perhaps to post for a grade. Both the Course Blog and the Content Area Blogs have the same style and layout.

Using the Blog

Once you have entered a Blog, you will see a menu of options on the right-hand side. From these options, you can determine the level of privacy within the Blog, create or edit Blog entries, and filter or search Blog entries.

To create a new entry, click the **New Entry** link within the menu. On the next page you will see a box for the title of your entry, as well as a text box for the entry itself. The Visual Text Box permits the use of HTML formatting, as well as common text formatting options like those within Microsoft Word. Once you have completed your Blog entry, click **Save**. You should now be looking at the Blog again, and your new entry should be visible at the top of this page. Depending on the configuration of the Blog, you may also be able to revise your previous posts, or comment on the posts of other users

Wiki

The wiki tool in Blackboard is a feature designed to assist in collaborative learning. The Wiki provides a place for users within a course to work together on a collaborative website. Depending on the configuration of the Wiki tool, student users may be permitted to post new pages, purge pages or comment on pages. Each course has a default Course Wiki available within the **Tools** menu on the left hand side. Your instructor may choose to use the default Wiki, or may choose to create a new Wiki within one of the course content areas. In either case, the look and feel of the Wiki will be the same.

Using the Wiki

The Wiki tool has a similar look to the Blog tool. From the right-hand menu within the Wiki, users can determine the level of privacy for their contributions, create or edit Wiki pages, as well as use search and print functions.

Depending on the creation settings of the wiki, you may be restricted from creating new pages or purging existing pages. If you have the ability to create and/or purge pages, you will also be able to see a page revision history by clicking **History** on the right hand side. If you are able to create a new page for a Wiki, you can click the **New** button on the right-hand side to do so. On the next screen is a space to set the title of a page and a Visual Text Box that allows for editing and formatting. You may use the formatting options provided by the Visual Text Box, or you can toggle HTML mode to manually encode the appearance. In addition to text and hyperlinks, you may also add pictures and embed videos within the body of your wiki. You can easily create links to other pages in the wiki, or simply use the navigation list on the right-hand menu.

If you are deleting a page, Blackboard will ask if you would like to delete or purge the page. Purging a page will completely remove the page as well as its page history. Deleting a page will leave the page history intact for possible reinstatement.

Conclusion

This document is intended to serve as a quick guide for students using Blackboard. If you wish to obtain further information about the features discussed within this document, please visit <http://www.case.edu/its/itac/blackboard>. If you have any problems or difficulties and would like assistance, you can contact the help desk (368-HELP) or email blackboard@case.edu with your questions.