# Blackboard Basics

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**To Login:**

Go to Blackboard by going to the Northwestern webpage www.nwosu.edu. Hover over "Resources," and then click "Blackboard." Click "Faculty/Staff Blackboard Access." Your username will be your full Northwestern email address – all lower case. You will use the same password that you use for your University email account and Self-Service. If you would like to reset your password, log into Self-Service, click your username in the upper right, and then click "Change Password." This will change your password for Blackboard, Self-Service, and your University email. Note: when you change your password in Self-Service, it may take up to 30 minutes for the password to update in Blackboard and email.

You will find your courses by clicking "Courses" in the navigation panel on the left side of the screen, then select the appropriate semester from the drop-down menu at the top of the courses screen.

A Content Area is a location where you can create assignments, folders, items, syllabi, tests/quizzes, etc.

**To add Content Areas to your Course Content Menu:**

1. Hover your mouse pointer over the "+" sign in the upper right portion of your Course Content Menu.
2. Choose "Content Area."
3. Name the Content Area.
4. Check "Available to Users."
5. Click Submit.

A Tool Link creates a link from your Course Content Menu to a tool, such as Email, Discussion Board, Journal, or Blog that you want readily available for your students to access.

**To add a Tool Link:**

1. Hover your mouse pointer over the "+" sign in the upper right portion of your Course Content Menu.
2. Choose "Tool Link."
3. Name the Tool Link (It is recommended but not required that you name the link the same as the tool you want to add).
4. Select the tool from the drop down menu.
5. Check "Available to Users."
6. Click Submit.

A Course Link creates a link from your Course Content Menu to another location in your course, such as a specific resource or assignment, that you want readily available for your students to access.

**To add a Course Link:**

1. Hover your mouse pointer over the "+" sign in the upper right portion of your Course Content Menu.
2. Choose "Course Link."
3. Browse to find the location to link to.
4. Name the Course Link.
5. Check "Available to Users."
6. Click Submit.

**To change Course Styles:**

1. Go to the Control Panel.
2. Click on the chevron next to "Customization" to expand the menu.
3. Click on "Teaching Style."
4. Change options for menu style, course entry point, or add a banner (796 pixels wide).
5. Click Submit.

**To Create an Announcement:**

1. Go to the Control Panel.
2. Click on the chevron next to "Course Tools" to expand the menu.
3. Click on "Announcements."
4. Click the "Create Announcement" button.
5. Type in a subject and choose other options (Choose "Send a copy of this announcement immediately" if you want your users to be emailed a copy of the announcement).
6. Click Submit.

**To Create a Folder:**

1. Go to the Course Content Menu.
2. Click on a Content Area.
3. Hover your mouse pointer over the "Build Content" button.
4. Click on "Content Folder."
5. Name the Folder and type a description for your students.
6. Enter other criteria, such as availability.
7. Click Submit.

**To Create an Item:**

1. Go to the Course Content Menu
2. Click on a Content Area
3. Hover your mouse pointer over the "Build Content" button.
4. Click on "Item."
5. Name the Item and type directions for your students.
6. Enter other criteria, such as adding an attachment and availability.
7. Click Submit.

**To Create an Assignment:**

1. Go to the Course Content Menu.
2. Click on a Content Area.
3. Hover your mouse pointer over the "Assessments" button.
4. Click on "Assignment."
5. Name the Assignment and type directions for your students.
6. Enter other criteria, such as points and availability.
7. Click Submit.

**To Create a Discussion Board:**

1. Go to the Course Content Menu.
2. Click on "Discussions."
3. Click the "Create Forum" button.
4. Name the Forum and type directions for your students.
5. Enter other criteria, such as availability and points (if the discussion board will be graded).
6. Click Submit.

**To Create a Test:**

1. Go to the Control Panel.
2. Click on Course Tools > Tests, Surveys and Pools > Tests
3. Click on "Build Test."

4. On the next screen, enter a name for the test. If you like you may also add a description (appears below the name of the test in your content area), and Instructions (appears above the test questions while students take the test).
5. Click Submit.
6. To add a new question:
    - Click on “Create Question” and select the type of question you would like to add (True/False, Multiple Choice, Essay, etc.).
    - Fill out the information for that question type.
    - Click “OK.”
7. To reuse one or more questions from another test or pool:
    - Click on “Reuse Question” and select “Find Questions.”
    - Under “Pools” and “Tests” select the Pool or Test that contains the questions you would like to copy to your new test.
    - Under “Question Types,” check the specific type(s) of questions you would like to use, or leave everything unchecked to see all types.
    - You may search questions for keywords.
    - Check the box for each question you would like to copy into your new test.
    - Click on the Submit button to copy the questions into your test.
8. To include a random block of questions from a pool (for example, to randomly select 10 questions from a pool of 30):
    - Click on “Reuse Question” and select “Create Random Block.”
    - Under “Pool,” select the Pool from which you would like to draw questions.
    - Under “Question Types,” check “All” to include all types of questions in your random block. If you would like to limit your random block to specific types of questions (only multiple choice or true/false), check the specific type(s) of questions to include.
    - Click Submit.
    - Enter points per question and number of questions to display.
9. When your test is complete, click “OK” to leave the test.

**To Deploy a Test:**

1. Go to the content area where you want to deploy the test (Assignments, Course Materials, etc.)
2. Click on the “Assessments” button and select “Test.”
3. Click on the name of the test you wish to deploy and click “OK.”
4. On the “Test Options” page that appears, you will select how and when your students will view the test.
    - Under “1. Test Information,” you will see the information you entered while creating the test. The description will appear beneath the link to the test in your content area.
    - Under “2. Test Availability,” choose from these options:
        - **Make the Link Available:** Select “Yes.” You can limit the availability of the test using the Display After/Until tool below. If you choose “No,” students will not be able to view the exam.

- **Add a New Announcement for this Test:** Select “Yes” to have Blackboard post an announcement that the test is available.
- **Multiple Attempts:** If you would like students to have more than one attempt at the test, check the box for multiple attempts. Select either “Unlimited Attempts” or “Number of Attempts.” If you choose “Number of Attempts,” enter the specific number of times you would like your students to be able to attempt the test.
- **Force Completion:** If you would like to force students to complete the text the first time they launch the test, select this option.
- **Set Timer:** The timer in Blackboard does not close the exam if a student exceeds the time limit. It simply sets an expected completion time and records the length of time each student spends in the exam. Instructors can view this information in the Grade Center column for the test. To set the timer, check the “Set Timer” checkbox and enter the time in hours and minutes.
- **Auto Submit:** Select “Yes” if you would like the exam to be submitted automatically whenever the timer expires.
- **Display After:** Check the box and enter the date and time that the test should become available to students. If the box is not checked, the dates and times will not be saved.
- **Display Until:** Check the box and enter the date and time that the test should no longer be available to students. If the box is not checked, the dates and times will not be saved.
- **Password:** If you wish to have students enter a password to access the exam, check the box and enter a case-sensitive password. This tool is especially useful when proctoring exams or giving make-up exams for specific students.

- Under “4. Self-Assessment Options,” instructors choose how the test results are recorded.
  - **Include this Test in the Grade Center Score Calculations:** This option is turned on by default. If you do not wish for the test to count toward student total grades, uncheck the box.
  - **Hide Results for this Test Completely from Instructor in Grade Center:** If checked, this option hides all student scores from instructors. This information cannot be recovered by the instructor or the System Administrator. Please do not check this option.
- Under “5. Test Feedback,” select the feedback you wish students to see after they complete the test: Score, Submitted Answers, Correct Answers, and/or Feedback. Unchecking all boxes until the testing period ends is a common practice. Instructors may edit the feedback option after students are finished taking the test or grading is complete.
- Under “6. Test Presentation,” instructors choose how a test is displayed to students.
  - **All at Once:** All questions are displayed on a single screen

- **One at a Time:** This option forces students to click a “next” button to submit their work and move to the next question as they move through the exam. If “One at a Time” is selected, an instructor can also choose to Prohibit Backtracking, so that students cannot access questions they have previously submitted or change their answers.
- **Randomize Questions:** Students will see questions in a different order each time they attempt a test

5. Click Submit

My recommendations for setting the test options are as follows:

**Present the questions all at once rather than one at a time.** Blackboard exams are typically saved every 5 seconds by the system, and minimizing the number of times a student has to move from one page to the next (loading a new page for each new question) will decrease the number of opportunities for an error to occur.

**Turn off Force Completion.** Turning Force Completion off will allow students to pick up where they left off if they get kicked out. This spares them from having to contact you to reset their test. This is not a second attempt; they resume the test at the point they were kicked out. This is not the same thing as allowing multiple attempts.

**Timer:** The timer starts when the student clicks the Begin button and stops when the exam is submitted. If the user leaves the test and then comes back (assuming Force Completion is off), the timer will continue to run the entire time. The test does not shut down when the test time is up unless you have turned “Auto Submit” on. If a student exceeds the allotted time, the test will be flagged as “Needs Grading” in your grade center. Click the action button (downward arrows) for the attempt, view the attempt, and click the “Test Information” link to see how much time the student took.

**Encourage your students to review the information at www.nwosu.edu/blackboard under “online testing tips.”** The information on this web page is intended to help students take steps before and during their exam to reduce the likelihood that they will encounter a problem.

**To Copy Course Materials from One Course to Another:**

1. Go into the old course (the one with the material that you want to copy).
2. From the Control Panel click “Packages and Utilities” then “Course Copy.”
3. From the drop down menu, select “Copy Course Materials into an Existing Course.”
4. From there search for the Destination Course (the one that you are teaching this semester and want to copy the material to) and select it.
5. Check the boxes for the content that you want to copy.
6. If you are moving quizzes or exams make sure that you select “Tests, Surveys and Pools.”
7. If you are moving assignments or quizzes/exams that are linked to the Grade Center, make sure that you select “Grade Center Columns and Settings.”
8. Click Submit.

The process usually takes a few minutes to complete.  Keep in mind that this operation, depending on the settings you choose, might not automatically deploy exams that you had deployed in the previous course.  You will need to follow the instructions found in this guide deploying your quizzes and exams to make them available to your students.