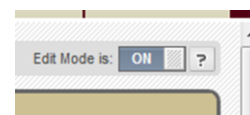




Simple things to do with a Blackboard course website

Once you've obtained your FSU ID and logged in to campus.fsu.edu, click the Support tab to locate the link for requesting a course site. Then, once you receive an email notification that your site is ready, log in, click the course name, and make Blackboard work for you:

*Tip: Turn on **Edit Mode** to access many Bb controls without going to the Control Panel.*



- 1. Make Your Site Available or Unavailable** — Prevent enrolled students from accessing your course site before it's ready by making it "unavailable": *Control Panel > Customization > Properties > 3. Set Availability* (don't forget to undo this later!). You can do the same with selected course content by turning on **Edit Mode** (upper right of screen) and clicking the drop-down arrow next to an item:
 - For main course menu items, select *Hide Link*.
 - For items in content areas, select *Edit* and look for *Permit Users to View this Content*.
- 2. Optimize Your Course Menu** — In **Edit Mode**, turn off unused items on the main course and rename or reorder the remaining items to simplify student navigation. Each menu item has a dropdown menu next to it as well as a double-headed arrow to the left that you can drag up or down. Click the large plus sign at the top of the course menu to add new items, such as content areas, links, or module pages. You can also simplify the Course Tools link by selecting the link while in Edit Mode and then clicking *Hide Link* next to any tools you don't intend to use.
- 3. Design a Unique Look** — To distinguish your site from others and reinforce course themes, add a banner and control the appearance of the course site through *Control Panel > Customization > Style*. Need a banner? Use our [Banner Image Creator](#).
- 4. E-mail Students** — FSU's Registrar automatically enrolls students in your course site. Even if you've made the site unavailable, you can email the entire class or selected groups and individuals via *Control Panel > Course Tools > Send E-mail*.

5. **Post Announcements** — By default, the Announcements page is the “landing point” for your course site. Anything you post here also appears on a student’s My FSU page. You can choose to make an announcement permanent or temporary (students can always click a tab to see older announcements). In **Edit Mode**, simply click *Create Announcement*. (If you’ve deleted the Announcements page from the main menu, you can easily add it back via the plus sign at the top of the main course menu.)
6. **Collect Student Work via Assignments** — Why bother keeping track of emailed file attachments? Instead, create a Blackboard *Assignment*, which lets students submit their work (with a date stamp!) and maintains a copy in your course site. In **Edit Mode**, go into any content area (e.g. Course Documents), click the *Create Assessment* dropdown menu, and select *Assignment*. You can even attach detailed assignment instructions and template files for students. Once created, the Assignment has its own gradebook column; view student submissions by clicking the green “!” symbols.
7. **Post Grades** — In the Grade Center, you can add entries for each assessment and indicate whether students can see them (students only see their own grades, and the class average for a given assessment item, via the Course Tools menu). To add an extra column in Grade Center, access through: *Control Panel > Grade Center > Full Grade Center > Create Column*. To view students’ works and/or assign a grade, put your cursor over a table cell and either click to directly enter a grade or select the dropdown menu to access multiple attempts. For additional options, click the dropdown menu at the top of the column. *Caution: using calculated grades is for advanced users, so pursue that option with care.*
8. **Track Student Use** — Verify student use of the course site and identify frequently accessed materials through *Control Panel > Evaluation > Course Reports*. For more fine-grained details of usage, enable Statistics Tracking for any items you add in the course content areas by selecting the dropdown menu next to an item’s title while in **Edit Mode**.
9. **Post Discussion Questions** — Encourage interaction outside the classroom by creating discussion forums, either on specific course content or as open-ended “virtual office hours.” Be sure to establish policies and post rubrics to clarify expectations, and attend closely to the various settings available when you first create the forum. To get started, while in **Edit Mode** go to *Course Tools > Discussion Board > Create Forum*. (Tip: Once you create a forum, you can link directly to it from any content area via the *Add Interactive Tool* dropdown menu.)

10. **Create Groups** — You can set up group areas with their own discussion boards as well as other tools. Only the group members that you specify can access a group's functions. Setting up groups requires a little investment of time. Begin by going to *Control Panel > Users and Groups > Groups > Create Single Group*. You can create a self-enroll group where students can sign up themselves, or a manual-enroll one where you assign students to a specific group. On the next screen, enter descriptive information, select the tools you want the group members to share, and (if manual-enroll) assign students to the group. You can always come back and modify these settings by going to *Control Panel > Users and Groups > Groups* and selecting the dropdown menu next to a group's title.

11. **Build Content** – Decide how to organize your course material — by weeks, topics, units, or texts. For maximum instructional design benefit, match your organizational system with learning outcomes and assessments. Then add files: syllabus, calendar, grading references (rubrics, instructions, samples), readings, video clips, images – Blackboard can take just about any file format, and you can add links to library databases and other useful websites. Simply go into any content area (such as Assignments) while in **Edit Mode** and select from the *Build Content* dropdown. For short documents, you can simply paste* text in a text box; otherwise, browse your computer to select the desired file and upload it. Double-headed arrows in the content area allow you to easily rearrange materials while in Edit Mode.

* **Caution: Don't copy and paste directly from word processors** like Microsoft Word or Apple iWorks Pages, as this will include invisible formatting codes that can cause the page to be unviewable. Instead, first paste the text into a plain-text editor like Notepad, then copy and paste from there to Bb. (If formatting is critical, use the browse-and-upload method instead.)