

# Blackboard Basics

## Instructions for Setting Blackboard Password on VIP

Login to VIP (<http://vip.sc.edu>)

(Forget your PIN? Students should contact the Registrar's Office; faculty/staff should contact your departmental Human Resources representative)

\* Click on the **Technology** link on the left

\* Click on **Show Me Network Username**

Your USC Network Username will be displayed and you will be prompted to choose your password. You must type in the password twice to verify your choice.

\* Click on the **SET PASSWORD** button to set your new password

## Logging in:

1. Go to <http://blackboard.sc.edu>.
2. Click the Login button on the left side of the screen.
3. On the next screen type your Username and Password in the appropriate fields and click Login.

The next page you see will be your My USC screen with "Welcome <your name>" at the top. You will see a list of all of the courses you are teaching on the "My USC" page. To get a more descriptive list of your courses, click the Courses tab at the top of the screen.

## Where does my Blackboard email go?

You can send email to your students (and they can send email to you) from within Blackboard. All USC students, faculty, and staff have an email account on the University's Gamecock E-Mail system (GEM). This is your default email address in Blackboard!

If you want your Blackboard email sent to an address other than GEM (for example Groupwise) you can change your email address in Blackboard by clicking on the "Personal Information" link in the upper left corner of the "My USC" screen. Then click Edit Personal Information, type in your preferred email address in the email field and click on Submit. Students can change their email address in Blackboard the same way.

If you would like to use your GEM account -

- Your email address on GEM is <YOURUSERNAME>@MAILBOX.SC.EDU.
- You can read any mail sent to you at that address by going to <http://webmail.sc.edu>.
- The same username and password that you use to access Blackboard will also allow you to access GEM.

## Adding Announcements, Course Materials and Assignments

## **Announcements**

Using the announcements feature in Blackboard can help you recover class time, and will allow you to communicate with your students between classes.

To post an announcement:

1. Click the Control Panel button.
2. Under "Course Tools" click Announcements.
3. Click Add Announcement.
4. On the next screen under "#1 Announcement Information" type a subject and the text of the announcement.
5. By default announcements appear on the course's main page for 7 days. If you want an important announcement to always stay on the main page, click the "Yes" button next to "Always show this announcement...".
6. Scroll to the bottom of the screen and click Submit.
7. You will see a "Receipt" on the next screen. Use the navigation links just above the receipt to go back to Announcements, return to the Control Panel, or go to your class.

## **Linking to Course Content from an Announcement**

Blackboard 6 makes it easy to create links from one area of a class to content in another area of the class. To see how this works just create another announcement using the instructions above, only this time click the "Browse" button (option 3). This will bring up the Course Map and you'll be able to choose any content area, folder, or individual document to link to.

## **Adding Course Content**

For the purposes of this class we will use the Course Documents section of our class to add content. The method for adding content under the Course Information and Assignments areas is the same.

Blackboard 6 offers tremendous flexibility for organizing course content. You can add documents or links to documents, folders, links to external web sites, links to other areas of the course, and quizzes and surveys to any of the content areas. This allows you to build your course around learning units, chapters of the textbook, class projects, or anything you like.

Your course will be more organized and it will be easier for students to find course materials if you put documents, links, and other materials into folders.

To add a folder:

1. If you are not already in the Control Panel, click the Control Panel button.
2. Under "Content Areas" click Course Documents.
3. On the next screen click the Folder icon.

4. On the next screen under "#1 Folder Information" choose a name for the folder from the drop down menu, or type your own name. You can select a color for the name by clicking the "Pick" button. You can also add a description for the folder by typing in the "Text" box.
5. Scroll to the bottom of the screen and click Submit.
6. On the "Receipt" screen, click the OK button at the bottom of the screen. You will be returned to the Course Documents area of the Control Panel and will see your folder there with "Modify", "Copy", and "Remove" buttons to the right. These buttons allow you to edit the folder information, copy the folder somewhere else, or delete the folder.

To add a document to the folder:

1. Assuming that you are still in the Course Documents area of the Control Panel, click the name of the folder you just created.
2. Click the Item icon at the top of the screen.
3. You have a couple of options on the next screen that allow you to add course content in different ways. We will discuss these in detail.
4. **#1 – Content Information** – allows you to choose a name for your document from the drop down menu, or type your own name. You can then copy and paste text into the box labeled "Text" if you choose to do so.
5. **#2 – Content Attachments** – allows you to upload a file to your class. These can include word processing documents, pictures, PowerPoint presentations, and PDF files - to name a few. Use the Browse button to locate the file on your computer and then click Submit. You will get a Receipt from Blackboard as usual.
6. **#3 – Options**
  - a. Do you want to make the content visible? Select **Yes** or **No** to make the content visible to students. If **No** is selected, none of the information entered on this page will appear to students.
  - b. Do you want to add offline content? Offline content is a direct path to a specified file on a CD-ROM that is usually provided by an Instructor. To access this file the user must have the correct CD in their computer.
  - c. Do you want to track the number of views? Select **Yes** to indicate that the system is to track the number of times a user accesses this item.
  - d. Do you want to add metadata? Metadata is data about the added item, such as ownership, resource format, and copyright information.
  - e. Choose date restrictions. If you select **Yes** to make content visible, you can restrict the dates and times students can access the content.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Please be aware that if you upload files (such as word processing files) to your Blackboard class, you are assuming that your students have software that will open those files. This may NOT be a correct assumption! For this reason, PDF (Portable Document Format) files have a real advantage. All that is required to read and print PDF files is Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is free, and which most people already have on their computer. In order for you to create PDF files you need Adobe Acrobat software (not just the Reader), which you can purchase from Computer Services at a significant discount. It is also worth checking to see if your department already has Adobe Acrobat.

## **Adding External Links**

This feature allows you to easily share valuable web resources with your class.

To add an external link:

1. Click the Control Panel button.
2. Under "Content Areas" click Course Documents (or any content area).
3. Click the External Link button.
4. On the next screen fill in the name of the site, the web address (URL), and if you like, a brief description.
5. By default Blackboard will open the web site in a frame, leaving all of the course buttons in their usual place. If you prefer, you can have the external web site open in a separate window by clicking the Yes button next to "Launch Item in external window" under #2 Options.
6. Scroll to the bottom of the screen and click Submit.

## **Adding Assignments**

The assignment function in Blackboard allows you to easily create, grade, and make comments on student assignments. This feature also allows you to exchange documents with students electronically.

To create an assignment:

1. Go to the Control Panel and then select the content area of your class where you want the assignment to appear (such as Course Documents or Assignments).
2. Choose Assignment from the drop down menu on the right and then click GO.
3. Type a name, assign the point value, and write instructions if you wish.
4. Set the options of your choice and attach a file or files if desired.
5. Click Submit.

The assignment will be added to the content area you specified and to the gradebook. To view a completed assignment, go to the grade book. Clicking on the ! in the row next to a student's name will allow you to grade an assignment for that individual, add comments, and send a file attachment back to the student.

If you click on the name of the assignment at the top of the grade book column you'll go to the Item Options screen where you can choose Item Download to download multiple files. After you've graded the assignments you can use the Item File Clean Up to delete multiple files at once.

## **Sending Email**

You can send email to an entire class, to groups of students, or individual students.

1. From the Control Panel of your class, click on Send E-mail under Course Tools.
2. You will then see a list of choices. Click All Users to e-mail all people in the class.

3. Click on Single / Select Users if you want to choose specific people to e-mail. Click the check box next to the name of the students you want to email.
4. Type a subject and the text of your message.
5. Add Attachments will allow you to attach a file to your message.
6. Click Submit to send your message.

You will receive a copy of any e-mail you sent through Blackboard.

Email is an excellent way to communicate with students. However, using email sometimes creates unrealistic expectations. Some students seem to believe that when they email you, they should receive a reply within minutes. To avoid complaints, let your students know how often you plan to read and respond to email questions.

### **Staff Information**

This section of your Blackboard class allows you to add your contact information, office hours, and even a picture if you like. You can add more than one profile if you have co-instructors or teaching assistants.

1. Go to the Control Panel.
2. Under "Course Tools" click Staff Information.
3. Click Add Profile.
4. On the next screen under "#1 Profile Information" fill in any information you want to provide to your students in the appropriate fields.
5. Under "#2 Options" you may add a picture by using the browse button to locate a picture you have saved on your computer. You may also type the web address of your personal web page, if you have one.
6. Scroll to the bottom of the screen and click Submit.
7. You will see a "Receipt" on the next screen.

### **Gradebook**

There are three ways to enter grades in the Blackboard Gradebook. You can manually create gradebook items and type in the grades for each student, or you can create online quizzes, and Blackboard will enter the grade when each student completes the quiz. You can also upload grades to Blackboard from a spreadsheet. Blackboard 6 accepts both letter grades and numeric grades.

*To manually create a gradebook item:*

- 1) Make sure you are in the Control Panel and click Gradebook under Assessment.
- 2) Click Add Item. On the next screen, enter a name for the item, and select an item type from the drop down menu. Enter the possible number of points for the item and select how you want the grade to display.
- 3) Click Submit. You will see the receipt screen. Click OK.
- 4) You will then see the spreadsheet view of the gradebook with the item you created. To enter grades for an item, click its name. On the next screen click Item Grade List to enter the grades.

*Other Grade Book Options:*

- Manage Items allows you to modify or remove items and change the order in which they appear in the spreadsheet. In some cases you will have to remove a quiz from the content area where you placed it before you can remove it from the grade book.
- Gradebook Settings.
  - Spreadsheet Settings allows you to change the way student information is displayed in the spreadsheet.
  - Manage Gradebook Categories allows you to create new categories into which gradebook items can be grouped.
  - Manage Display Options allows you to create and modify grade display options and set their values.
- Weight Grades - allows you to weight grades by item or by categories, such as homework, quizzes, etc. All items must have a point value of 100 for the Weight Grades feature to work properly.
- Download Grades will download the grade book as a CSV file that you can open with Microsoft Excel.
- Upload Grades will allow you to upload grades from a spreadsheet to the Blackboard grade book. Blackboard recommends that you first download your grade book, then enter the grades into the spreadsheet, and upload them.

### **Instructor Assignments/Class Rolls/Drop Add/Adding TAs**

The USC Blackboard system gets information about faculty from the Human Resources database. Information about students comes from the Registrar's database.

Instructor assignments and class rolls

All USC courses, instructor assignments, and course enrollments are downloaded from the University's Student Information Systems databases and automatically loaded into the Blackboard system every evening.

Late registration and drop/add

Students who register late, or who add your class during the drop/add period will show up on your Blackboard class roster. However, due to the time required to process records, there may be a lag of 24 to 48 hours.

Students who drop a class are not automatically removed from the class in Blackboard (although their access to the class will be disabled). This is done to ensure that students who may temporarily disappear from a class roll (because of late payment of fees or other reasons) will not lose grades or class work they have in Blackboard.

Adding Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants can be added by using the Enroll User option under "User Management" in the Control Panel. When enrolling a user it is best to search for someone using the user's Blackboard username. By default everyone is enrolled as a student. To change the person's status to Teaching Assistant use the List/Modify Users option. After you've located the person in your class roll with the search feature, click the Properties button next to their name and scroll to the bottom of the screen to change the person to a Teacher's Assistant.

#### Multiple Sections/Cross-listed courses

The current version of Blackboard does not handle multiple sections of the same class and cross-listed courses well. If you are teaching several sections of the same class and do not want to maintain multiple web sites in Blackboard, please contact one of the Blackboard support staff. We can "combine" your sections by copying all of the class rolls into one section.

#### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions about Blackboard, you can contact Teaching and Technology Services at 777-6015 or send e-mail to [bbsupport@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:bbsupport@mailbox.sc.edu).