



Getting Started with Blackboard

Blackboard is a course management system used campus-wide at NIU. The system allows faculty to post course materials, deliver tests and surveys, hold online discussions, and facilitate many other course-related functions.

Accessing Blackboard at NIU

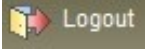
1. Open a browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari or Chrome)
2. Type webcourses.niu.edu in the address bar and click **Go** or press **Enter**
3. Type your **NIU AccountID** in the **Username** box
4. Type your **Password** in the **Password** box
5. Click the **Login** button to log in to Blackboard



Remember!

- All currently enrolled students and teaching faculty have access to the Blackboard system
- NIU is using Blackboard version 9.1, having upgraded the system May 30, 2011
- If faculty wishes to teach using Blackboard, they need to request their Blackboard courses each semester
- To learn more about using Blackboard, access the Teaching with Blackboard support site at: www.niu.edu/blackboard

Navigating within Blackboard

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- Click on the **NIU** tab to access your Blackboard courses or Blackboard tools
 - After logging in, click on the **Courses** tab to access your Blackboard courses
 - Click on the **Community** tab to access organizations
 - Click the **Content Collection** tab to store, manage and share content
 - Click on the **Services** tab to access NIU information, NIU faculty services, and Blackboard Faculty tools
 - Always **logout**  from Blackboard when finished with your session

Requesting a Course in Blackboard

In order to teach with Blackboard, faculty need to request their Blackboard course(s) each semester, and you need to be an instructor of record to request a Blackboard course.

1. After logging in to Blackboard, click the **Services** tab
2. Click **Blackboard Faculty Tools**
3. Click **My Courses** to request a course
4. Select the **Semester** and click the **Submit** button
5. Select the courses you would like to request and click **Request Single Section(s)** (for master courses select **Combine Sections**)
6. Click the **Submit** button

Note: It takes one business day to process the request

Creating an Announcement

Announcements are an ideal tool for communicating time-sensitive material to students, such as reminders about upcoming due dates or changes to the syllabus.

1. From the *Control Panel*, click **Course Tools**, then click **Announcements**
2. Click the **Create Announcement** button
3. On the *Create Announcement* page, enter the announcement **Subject**
4. Type the **Message**
5. Specify whether the announcement is date restricted and if it is, select **Date Restrictions**
6. Click the **Browse** button if you want to create a link to an area in the course
7. Click the **Submit** button

Sending Email

Blackboard email is a tool designed to help faculty communicate with students, fellow staff members and TAs. Email can be sent to select students, TAs or an entire class.

1. From the *Control Panel*, click **Course Tools**, then click **Send Email**
2. Select the **Recipients**
3. Enter the **Subject**
4. Type the **Message**
5. (Optional) Click **Attach a file** to attach a file in the email
6. Click the **Submit** button

Making the Course Available

All courses need to be manually made available for students to access. After the end of the semester, courses are automatically made unavailable.

1. After logging in to Blackboard, select the desired course from the *NIU* or *Courses* tab
2. From the *Control Panel*, click **Customization**, then click **Properties**
3. Under *Set Availability*, (Option 3) select **Yes**
4. Click the **Submit** button

Note: Setting the availability is an immediate process

Adding Content to the Course

Numerous options exist for storing and deploying course content in Blackboard. Content Areas exist in the *Course Menu* by default, but faculty can create additional content areas.

1. In Edit Mode, click **Content** or **Information** in the course menu
2. On the *Action Bar*, click **Build Content** and select **Item** or **File** (**Item** will have an additional **Text** field while **File** only allows to attach a file)
3. On the *Create Item/File* page, enter **Name** and **Text**
4. Click the **Browse My Computer** button to attach a file
5. Specify **Date and Time Restrictions** if needed
6. Click the **Submit** button

Recording Grades

The Blackboard Grade Center allows faculty to record grades for various assessments, keep track of grading history and generate reports that can be used for backup or shared with students.

1. From the *Control Panel*, click **Grade Center**, then click **Full Grade Center**
2. Click the **Create Column** button
3. On the *Create Column* page, enter **Column Name**
4. Enter **Points Possible**
5. Select the Options for displaying the grades to students
6. Click the **Submit** button
7. To record a grade, under the added column click in the cell for a particular student, type the grade and press **Enter**