Navigating the Blackboard Interface

Let’s look at how to navigate within Blackboard.

In the header bar, there are a number of links. The primary one, NIU, allows you to come back to this gateway page from anywhere in the system. This page has a variety of modules that summarize information from across Blackboard. You can customize this page by using the Add Module and Personalize Page buttons.

The most important module on this page is the My Courses module. In this area, you can find a list of all of the courses you belong to, whatever your role may be.

You can customize the courses that are displayed in the My Courses module by clicking on the gear icon in the upper right corner.

The next link is Courses. This page has a list of all of the courses you are a part of. This provides another way for you to view and access your courses.

The third link is Community. This page has a list of all of the Communities that you belong to or manage. Blackboard also calls these Organizations. Communities have all of the features of a Course, but they are not tied to course registration and student enrollments. Communities can be used for non-academic purposes, including departmental committees and student organizations, but there is a fee at NIU for non-academic use.

Next is the Content Collection link. The Content Collection allows you to store files online in Blackboard. It allows you to easily reuse files across multiple courses and makes it easy for you to share files with others both within NIU and outside.

The primary use for the Services link is to access the Blackboard Faculty Tools. Each semester you will need to use these to request your courses in Blackboard.

At the top of the header, you will see your name and a round power symbol. Click the round power symbol to log out of Blackboard when you are finished using it.
If you click on your name, the Global Navigation menu will open. This menu lets you easily access all of the courses and organizations you belong to in Blackboard.

The left side of the Global Navigation menu has icons for My Blackboard. This feature combines updates, posts, and more from all of your courses and communities on a single page. For example, the My Blackboard home page summarizes events on the calendar, grades, and posts across all courses.

The Posts page collects all of the discussion board, blog, and wiki posts from all courses and communities of which you are a member. You can even reply or comment directly from this page.

The Updates page lists all of the changes made to all of your courses and communities.

Students can view their latest grades in all of their courses from the My Grades page. They can also see the grades separately within each course.

The Retention Center is a feature that can track which of your students may be at risk based on grade, activity level, and missed deadlines. The Retention Center page in My Blackboard provides quick access to see how many students may be at risk in all of the courses you teach.

The Calendar in Blackboard displays all of the events from all of your courses, plus you can add personal events that are private.

Now you have three tools to help you navigate Blackboard: the links in the header, the Global Navigation Menu, and My Blackboard.