Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center
Blackboard *Getting Started* Quick Guide

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

Requesting a Course in Blackboard

You need to request your Blackboard course(s) each semester. You will only be able to request courses if you are the instructor of record in MyNIU.

1. After logging in to Blackboard, click **Tools** in the left-hand menu
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 course(s) you would like to request and click **Request Single Section(s)** (for master courses select **Combine Sections**)
6. Select whether you want the course to automatically be made available to students, and specify the date you want the course available
7. Click the **Submit** button

Note: The request will be processed immediately, and you will receive a confirmation email when it is complete. The course will initially be listed as *unavailable* because it is still hidden from students.

Making a Course Available

If you do not choose auto availability, you will need to make your course available manually. After the end of the semester, all courses are automatically made unavailable.

1. After logging in to Blackboard, select the desired course
2. From the *Control Panel*, click **Customization**, then click **Properties**
3. Under *Set Availability*, select *Yes*
4. Click the **Submit** button

Previewing Your Course as a Student

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

1. Log in to Blackboard and select a course from the *My Courses* module
2. Click the Student Preview icon, in the upper right corner of the course
3. Preview the course as a student
4. Click the Student Preview icon again to leave the preview mode

Note: Data created in preview mode, like assignment or test submissions, can be kept or deleted when you leave preview mode.

Remember!

You must request a new Blackboard course each semester

Learn more!

Tips, FAQs, and tutorials at
www.niu.edu/blackboard

Self-Paced Blackboard I online workshop at
facdev.niu.edu/selfpacedbb1

Ask a Question form NIU faculty and staff at
facdev.niu.edu/bbq

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. Click **Announcements** in the course menu
2. Click the **Create Announcement** button
3. On the *Create Announcement* page, enter the announcement *Subject*
4. Type the *Message*
5. Select whether the announcement is date restricted and if it is, enter *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

Adding Content to a Course

You can add content to Information, Content, or Assessments. These Content Areas exist in the *Course Menu* by default, but you can create additional content areas.

1. 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 you 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. Select *Date and Time Restrictions* if needed

Adding a Teaching Assistant

All students who enroll for a course in MyNIU will automatically be added to the Blackboard course. Teaching Assistants must be added manually.

1. From the *Control Panel*, click **Users and Groups**, then click **Users**
2. Click the **Find Users to Enroll** button
3. On the next page, type the individual's Account ID or click the **Browse** button to search by name
4. Choose the appropriate role from the dropdown menu
5. Click the **Submit** button

Note: You <u>must</u> click **Find Users to Enroll** before searching to find a user. The search fields on the *Users* page search within those students and faculty already in the course.

Sending Email

Blackboard email helps you communicate with students, TAs, and others who are enrolled in the Blackboard course. Email can be sent to select students, TAs , Groups, 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

Copying Content from an Old Course

Once you have built a course in Blackboard, you can copy the materials and structure into a new course, instead of building it again from an empty course.

1. Request your course for the new semester
2. Access the older course from the *My Courses* module
3. From the *Control Panel*, click **Packages and Utilities**, then click **Course Copy**
4. Click the **Browse** button to select the *Destination Course* (a new window will open with a list of all courses in which you have Instructor access)
5. Select the *Course Materials* you would like to copy
6. Click the **Submit** button

Notes:

To copy **Assignments**, select *Grade Center Columns & Settings* in addition to the Content Areas which contain Assignments.

To copy **Tests** or **Surveys**, select *Grade Center Columns & Settings* AND *Tests, Surveys, and Pools* in addition to the Content Areas which contain Tests or Surveys.

Course Copies usually take between 5-30 minutes, and courses with large files may take longer. You will receive a confirmation email alerting you that the course copy process has been completed.