

Blackboard Quickstart Guide

Getting Started in the New Interface

IT Services has launched an upgraded version of Blackboard. This guide is intended to offer a brief overview of some of the changes so that faculty may begin exploring the system. More detailed and exhaustive resources will be available in the form of a new FAQ Web page, tipsheets, and face-to-face learning opportunities.

How do I access the upgraded Blackboard?

Blackboard is available as it has been in previous years; access has not changed.

The system is linked multiple places on the HWS Web site, including the Quicklinks and may be directly accessed at <https://courses.hws.edu>.

Log in to Blackboard using the same HWS username and password that you used previously for this system and other HWS computing resources.

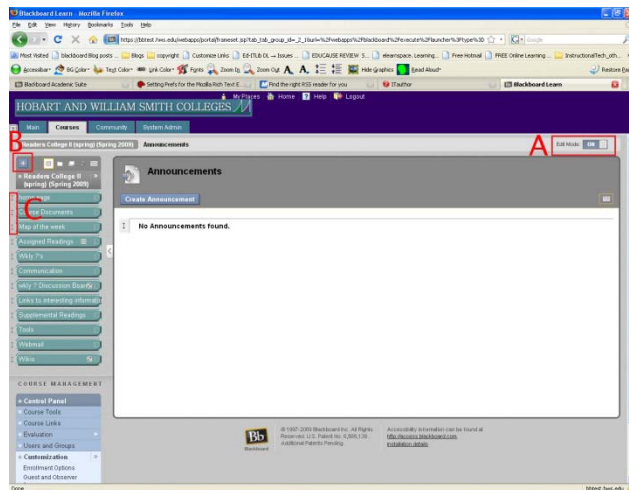
Why did HWS switch to the upgraded version?

The new Blackboard version offers an improved interface and several added functions. Improvements include easier customization of both the course menu and homepage, enhanced facilitation of student group work, and direct access to the control panel for course-building. The new version also allows for the customization of language settings in the course menu and navigation areas to Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Portuguese, Italian, French, Spanish and German. Additionally, faculty may now incorporate RSS (news) feeds into course sites to facilitate news monitoring from sources throughout the world.

What do I need to know about some of the new buttons in a course site?

The latest version of Blackboard introduces several new buttons that make course-building and customization easier for faculty.

A The **Edit Mode** button appears in upper right-hand corner of a course site and *must* be turned **On** in order to do any course-building.





Edit Mode OFF **OFF** In this state, no editing of the site is allowed. Click on **OFF** and the setting will switch to ON.


Edit Mode On **ON** Course site editing functions should now be enabled.

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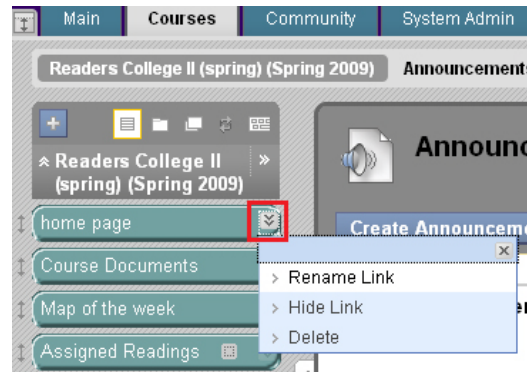
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B  The **plus sign** at the top of the Course Menu expands to a dropdown menu that offers a convenient way to add new content areas, course tools (such as a blog), web (external) links and more to the Course Menu.

C  Changing the ordering of Course Menu items is dramatically simplified in the new Blackboard interface. **Double-sided arrows** located next to course menu items indicate that these items maybe be moved vertically up and down by clicking and dragging.

 The **double downward arrow**, located on each menu button, indicates a dropdown menu that provides action options related to an item. In the example menu button, the downward arrows enable

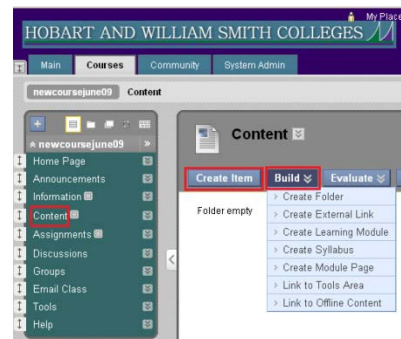
- Changing the name of the menu link
- Hiding the link from students
- Deleting the link altogether



In other instances, such as in the Content window itself, the downward arrows offer options for adding course materials such as folders, syllabi, and more.

How do I add content to a course site?

In the **Course Menu**, click on **Content** or **Information** and a new window will appear. Within this window several dropdown menus are available that will provide most of the content functions that faculty are accustomed to using in the previous version. The **Build**, **Evaluate**, **Collaborate** and **More** dropdown menus all provide options for adding and organizing new items to a course site.

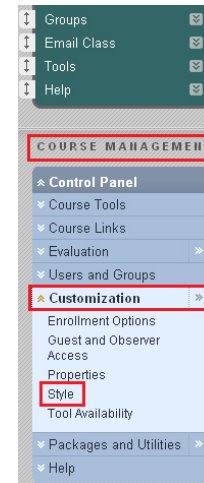


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How do I customize a course site, especially the course menu buttons?

Many of the settings that used to be multiple clicks away in the Control Panel are now conveniently located on the front course site screen located in the lower left area identified as **Course Management**. In particular, within the **Customization** dropdown menu, select **Style** and the new window offers options to change course menu buttons, the course entry page, and icon views.



How can I view a list of who is currently enrolled in the course site?

From the **Course Management** section noted above, click on **Control Panel > Users and Groups > Users > Username > Not blank** (the box remains blank) and then **Submit**.

Need Help? Experiencing Difficulty?

The Internet browser might be an issue. Below are a few options for addressing issues related to Internet browsers.

1) Open the course site in a different Internet browser. (ex. use Firefox instead of Safari or Internet Explorer) Although there are several browsers to choose from, Blackboard certifies Firefox 3+ for both Mac and PCs and testing indicates that Firefox performs most Blackboard functions with the greatest consistency. Download [Firefox](#).

2) Clear the cache or private data in the browser.

- **Firefox**, go to: **Tools > Clear Private Data**
- **Safari**, go to: **Safari > Empty Cache**
- **Internet Explorer**, go to: **Tools > Internet Options > Browsing History > Delete > (new window) Delete All**

3) Update a piece of software called **java** that works within the browser. Note: this may require restarting the machine.

- **Mac**: run a [Software Update](#)
- **PC**: download the latest [JRE](#)

Contact us! The Digital Learning Team encourages your questions and feedback about Blackboard. The Team may be reached in the Digital Learning Center in the Rosensweig Learning Commons at ext. 4420 or dlc@hws.edu.

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Additional Resources

If you would like to learn more, a nice series of two-minute introductory video tutorials are linked at [Grand Valley State University](#). While some of the Blackboard examples may vary from the HWS system, most of the tutorials offer relevant guidance on how to navigate the new Blackboard interface for course-building and customization.