WHAT WILL YOU LEARN TODAY?

Blackboard
STUDENT GUIDE

ELEVATE. THRIVE. SUCCEED.
Introduction

Blackboard (Bb) is a web-based learning management system (LMS) designed to allow students and faculty to participate in classes delivered online or to access online materials and activities to complement face-to-face teaching. Blackboard enables faculty to provide students with course materials, post announcements, send emails to the class, give assignments, conduct tests online, facilitate group work, encourage discussion, and more.

The degree to which Blackboard is used in a course varies, so it is important for you to discuss with your instructor his or her expectations.

This guide will help you learn the basics of interacting with faculty and fellow classmates on Blackboard. For more information, please take advantage of the resources available through VCU Technology Services, Learning Systems (go.vcu.edu/bbfaq).

Table of Contents

Getting Started and My Blackboard Tab page 2

How-To Guides

• How to Navigate a Course page 3
• How to Email the Instructor/Class page 3
• How to Submit an Assignment page 4
• How to Post to Discussion Forum page 5
• How to Use Content Management System (BbCMS) page 6
• Can’t Find Your Class in Blackboard See Back Cover
• Blackboard Resources at VCU See Back Cover

Troubleshooting

We hope you will use this guide as a point of departure and will use the resources we provide to learn more. Your first place to turn if you need technical help with Bb is the Downloads & Resources tab in Blackboard. You can also send an email to blackboard@vcu.edu or contact the IT Support Center: (804) 828-2227, or go.vcu.edu/itsc

See the back cover for additional Blackboard Resources at VCU.
Getting Started
Username (eID) & Password
Before you begin, you will need to know your VCU eID and password. Your eID is generally the first part of your VCU email address. If you have a password for your email address, you will use the same password. If you do not have an eID and password yet, go to ts.vcu.edu/kb/eID.html or call the IT Support Center at (804) 828-2227 for assistance.

Log In to Blackboard
Go to Blackboard online at http://blackboard.vcu.edu
Click the “Login to Blackboard” button and enter your eID and password.

My Blackboard Tab
My Courses will list the courses you are currently enrolled in. Click on the course title to enter the class. If your course doesn’t appear then contact your instructor.

Downloads & Resources will take you to a page with software downloads, plug-ins and additional help information.

Announcements from all your courses will appear here. It’s a good idea to check here daily for updates.
How to Navigate a Course

Use the course navigation buttons to move around in your course. Course navigation buttons might not look the same for every class. Professors can add, delete, rename or even change the colors of the buttons. Click on the course navigation buttons to see what they contain.

**Announcements** are where your professor will post important information about your course. It’s a good idea to check this on a daily basis.

**Contacts** are where you can find basic contact information so you will know how to reach your instructor.

**Discussion Boards** allows you to communicate with classmates by using forums and threads.

**Groups** allow professors to assign students to work together in various various tasks. Your instructor must set up Groups before you can use this feature.

**Tools** allow you to do many tasks such as; send email, create blogs, check grades, and much more.

**Help** takes you to the Blackboard User site.

---

How to Email the Instructor and/or Class

If enabled by the instructor, students have the option to send email to all or select users in a Bb course. Emails are received in the user’s VCU email account.

1. Click on the Tools/Communications button within the Course Menu.

2. Scroll down and click Send Email.

3. Select the users this email will be sent to (i.e. All Users, All Groups, All Teaching Assistants, All Students, All Instructors, Select Users or Select Groups). If sending to select individuals or groups, select the individual or group from the “Available to Select” box by using the arrows to move them over to the “Selected” box.

4. Enter a Subject and the Message.

5. Attach a file, if needed.

6. Click Submit.
How to Submit an Assignment

Once the instructor creates an assignment within Bb, students will have the option to submit the course work. The Assignment feature allows students to post course work via Blackboard. When the assignment has been graded the grade will appear in the My Grades area.

Assignments have this icon associated with them.

1. Locate the assignment in the course then click on it. Your instructor will need to tell you where to find the assignment in the course.

2. You have the option to either enter your work by clicking on the **Write Submission** box and/or, the preferred method, upload a document from an external source (i.e. MS Word) by clicking on one of the Attach Files buttons.

3. Add any comments you may want to submit to your instructor, if needed.

4. Click Submit to send your assignment to your instructor. The **Save as Draft** option will allow you to save changes and resume work later and **does not** submit to instructor.
How to Post a Discussion Forum

Discussion Boards are a tool used by faculty to allow students to communicate with each other about various topics and can also be graded. Students are able to reply to threads and upload files. Faculty must first create the forum before a student can create a thread within the Discussion Boards.

Create a Discussion Thread

1. Click on Discussions in the Course menu located to the left of your screen.
2. Select the Forum you would like to join by clicking on the title.
3. Click the “Create Thread” button located towards the top of the screen.
4. Enter a Subject, Message and attach a file, if necessary.
5. Finally, you have the options to Cancel, Save Draft or Submit. Clicking Submit will allow others to view the new thread. Saving as a draft will allow you to make edits at a later time before submitting.

Reply to a Thread

1. Click on Discussions in the Course Menu located to the left of your screen.
2. Select the Forum you would like to join.
3. Click on the thread you wish to comment on.
4. Click the Reply button.
5. Enter your comments in the Message box.
6. Finally, you have the options to Cancel, Save Draft or Submit. Clicking Submit will allow others to view the new thread. Saving as a draft will allow you to make edits at a later time before submitting.
How to Use the Content System (BbCMS)

The Blackboard Content System is an interface within Blackboard that allows users to upload files for storage and then access those same files from any computer with an internet connection. They can also share those files with other users by setting the appropriate permissions.

To Upload Files

1. Log into Blackboard.

2. Click the Content System link to access your Content Collection. The My Content area is for your individual use and is not available for others to see unless you share a document. These instructions show you how to add files to My Content, i.e. your personal space.

3. Hover over the Upload button; select the Upload Files or Upload Package to upload a zipped file. You can also create folders to help organize your content.

Share a File with Another User

To share a file with a person within the VCU community, you must set permissions (Read, Write, Remove, and/or Manage) on the file you wish to share.

1. First locate the file you wish to share and click on the hand icon located under the Permissions column.

2. Click the Select Specific Users button. (You can also select by Place, which means course or organization.)

3. Enter the username/eID. Tip: Click Browse if you do not know the username/eID.

4. Check the boxes with all the permissions you wish to grant (Read, Write, Remove, and Manage).

5. Click OK.

Note: You will notice the hand icon now appears open
Can’t Find Your Class in Blackboard?

If you’re enrolled in a course and don’t see it listed, there are a few possibilities:

Your professor is not required to use Blackboard for a particular course. It’s up to your instructor whether or not they use Blackboard as a teaching tool.

If you just enrolled today or yesterday, you may not be in the course database yet. It can take up to 24-48 hours before the system is updated with your information.

The professor has not made the course available to students yet. Some professors wait until after the first class to make it available on Blackboard.

You’re not “officially” enrolled in the class. Did you get an override to get into the class? Did you turn it in to Records and Registration? Log into the VCU Portal (my.vcu.edu) and click on eServices to make sure the course shows up in your Class Schedule.

If you and your professor can’t figure out why you aren’t enrolled in the course on Blackboard, call the IT Support Center at (804) 828-2227 or email blackboard@vcu.edu for assistance.

Blackboard Resources at VCU

askIT Knowledge Base
For additional Blackboard help, please visit the VCU Technology Services askIT Knowledge Base for Blackboard FAQ’s, videos, and more!

go.vcu.edu/bbfaq

IT Support Center
Email: blackboard@vcu.edu
Submit an IT Support Center Ticket: go.vcu.edu/itsc

Updated June 2016