Blackboard System Usage Standard

**Standard Type:** Administrative  
**Responsible Office:** Office of Technology Services  
**Initial Standard Approved:** 01/03/2018  
**Current Revision Approved:** 01/03/2018

### Standard Statement and Purpose

The proper creation, management and usage of accounts, courses and organizations in VCU’s Blackboard system are key to maintaining a secure and accurate system. This standard establishes the expectations and requirements for the creation, management and usage of accounts, courses and organizations in VCU’s Blackboard system.

This standard should be used in conjunction with the documents listed in the Related Documents section.

Noncompliance with this standard may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. VCU supports an environment free from retaliation. Retaliation against any employee who brings forth a good faith concern, asks a clarifying question, or participates in an investigation is prohibited.

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### Who Should Know This Policy

All users of the VCU Blackboard System are responsible for knowing this policy and familiarizing themselves with its contents and provisions.
Definitions

Agreement
An agreement is the document stating guidelines, standards and expectations for a specific task, role, or process.

Banner
Banner is the enterprise application that contains the Student Information System (SIS) used at VCU.

Blackboard (Bb) System
The Blackboard System is the online course management system used at VCU.

Blackboard System Administrators
The staff in the Department of Learning Systems in Academic Technologies is responsible for the day-to-day Blackboard System administration, maintenance and security.

Blackboard User
Within the context of this document, a Blackboard user is any user of the VCU Blackboard System. This includes faculty, staff, students, contractors, business partners, affiliates, and non-VCU participants in certificate or continuing education related programs.

Elevated Privileges
Within the context of this document, elevated privileges are privileges granted to allow specific administrative access and tasks to be performed in the Blackboard System.

Instructor
Person(s) designated by VCU to teach particular course(s). In the Blackboard System, this role is assigned to the person developing, teaching, or facilitating classes.

Primary Leader
In the Blackboard System, a role of leader is assigned to the person(s) facilitating the use of organization(s). The primary leader serves as the contact person for organization(s) in Blackboard.

User Accounts
Within the context of this document, user accounts are accounts that allow login to the Blackboard System.

VCU eID-Tools
VCU eID-Tools is the current tool used by authorized VCU employees to check the status of any current or former user at VCU.

VCU eID
The VCU eID is the electronic credential used by VCU employees, students, and affiliates to access various VCU systems, including but not limited to, email, the Blackboard System, and the VCU portal.
Blackboard System Usage Standard

Contacts

VCU Technology Services officially interprets this policy. VCU Academic Technologies is responsible for obtaining approval for any revisions through the appropriate governance structures. Questions about this standard should be directed to Academic Technologies, Learning Systems Department (elearning@vcu.edu).

Standard Specifics and Procedures

The following section contains the procedures and requirements of this standard.

A. Creation and Maintenance of User Accounts in Blackboard

1. Establishing Accounts
   Accounts must be established and maintained based on need and must be granted the minimum level of privileges required to meet those needs.

2. Sharing of Accounts
   Sharing of accounts is not allowed in the Blackboard System. Only one person per account shall be permitted. Accounts and passwords must never be shared with anyone other than the person for whom they were created. If it is determined that an account is being shared, reasonable corrective actions will be taken. The Blackboard System Administrators will report the violation to the account owner, their manager and if appropriate, to the Information Security Office (ISO).

3. Student Accounts
   The following requirements apply to all student accounts:
   • in order to maintain the synchronization of student data in the Blackboard and Banner systems, student Blackboard accounts must not be manually created; student Blackboard accounts should only be generated by the Banner system
   • all VCU student accounts should be derived from the student’s VCU eID
   • unless otherwise specified, VCU students are to be given the default Blackboard system role of "student"
   • all VCU student course enrollments will be automatically generated by the Banner system
   • instructors in the Blackboard System should not manually enroll students in courses that they are not officially registered for and enrolled in via the VCU Banner system; students not registered and enrolled in Banner will not receive credit for the course(s)
   • the Blackboard System Administrator will disable and/or remove the student account from the Blackboard System when:
     o official notification of a change in status is received from a designee of the university Registrar’s office
     o the account has not been accessed in two consecutive years and has no course or organization enrollments
     o the account does not have an active status at VCU (within eID-Tools) and has never been used
     o official notification that there has been a security breach, misuse of the account, or other critical situation is received from a designee of the Technology Services Information Security Office
   • the Blackboard System Administrators have sole responsibility for changing any student roles or
access in the Blackboard system

4. Faculty and Staff Accounts
The following requirements apply to faculty and staff accounts:
• faculty and staff Blackboard accounts will be generated by the Banner system, derived from the VCU eID
• unless otherwise specified, VCU faculty and staff will be given the default Blackboard system role of “faculty” or "staff", respectively
• the Blackboard System Administrator(s) will disable and/or remove the faculty or staff account from the Blackboard system when:
  o an official notification of a change in status is received from the Office of Human Resources and approved by the Technology Services CIO or designee
  o the account has not been accessed in two consecutive years and has no course or organization enrollments
  o the account owner does not have an active status at VCU and has never used the Blackboard account
  o official notification from the academic school’s Dean (or equivalent) is received and approved
  o official notification is received from the Technology Services CIO, VCU Information Security Officer, or VCU Information Security Office designee that there has been security breach, misuse of the account, or other critical situation
• the Blackboard System Administrator(s) have sole responsibility for changing any faculty or staff roles or access in the Blackboard system

5. Non-VCU Accounts
The following requirements apply to non-VCU student, faculty and staff accounts:
• requests for non-VCU student, faculty, or staff accounts must be submitted via a Technology Services help request ticket
• requesting party must agree to and follow provided guidelines when creating non-VCU accounts in Blackboard
• non-VCU accounts should always have an identifiable prefix, so as not to interfere with valid Banner-generated VCU eIDs
• unless otherwise specified, non-VCU student accounts are to be given the default Bb system role of "student"
• unless otherwise specified, non-VCU faculty and staff accounts are given the default Bb system role of “faculty” or "staff", respectively the Blackboard System Administrator(s) will remove non-VCU accounts from the Blackboard system when:
  o the account owner’s business with the university is completed and the Blackboard System Administrator(s) are notified by the individual, the department administrator or a designee of the individual’s home department
  o official notification of a change in status is received from the school, department, or program
  o the account has not been accessed in two consecutive years and has no course or organization enrollments
  o official notification is received from the Technology Services CIO, VCU Information Security Officer, or VCU Information Security Office designee that there has been security breach, misuse of the account, or other critical situation
• the Bb System Administrator(s) have sole responsibility for changing any non-VCU account roles
or access in the Blackboard system

B. Creation and Maintenance of Courses in Blackboard

1. Course Creation and Merges
   - credit and non-credit courses in the Blackboard System will be created by the instructor, using the tools provided
   - access to faculty course creation tools requires the user be listed in Banner as an active instructor of at least one course; otherwise, their Dean or department head must submit a help request ticket on their behalf
   - requests to merge courses in Blackboard must be submitted by the course instructor via a Technology Services help request ticket
   - staff in the Learning Systems department have sole responsibility for creating merged courses in Blackboard
   - Blackboard System Administrator(s) have sole responsibility for changing any non-VCU account roles or access in the Blackboard system

2. Enrollments and Maintenance for Credit Courses
   - course enrollments will be automatically processed from Banner to Blackboard for all credit courses
   - instructors in the Blackboard System should not manually enroll students in courses that they are not officially registered for and enrolled in via the VCU Banner system; students not registered and enrolled in Banner will not receive credit for the course(s)
   - the instructor is responsible for enrolling additional instructors, teaching assistants, observers, and guests in their Blackboard course(s)
   - for non-credit courses in Blackboard, the instructor is responsible for manually enrolling students who DO have a VCU eID

3. Enrollments and Maintenance for Non-credit Courses or Programs
   - for non-credit courses in Blackboard, the instructor is responsible for manually enrolling students who already have an account in the Blackboard system
   - instructors must submit a Technology Services help request ticket for students who do not have an account in the Blackboard system and need to be enrolled in a non-credit Blackboard course

C. Creation and Maintenance of Organizations in Blackboard

1. The Blackboard System Administrator(s) have sole responsibility for creating new organizations.
2. New organization requests must be submitted via a Technology Services help request ticket.
3. A primary leader must be designated by the requesting department, as the point-of-contact for the organization.
   - The designated "primary" leader for the organization is responsible for adding and maintaining additional leaders, and organization participants.
   - If the designated "primary" leader is no longer affiliated with the organization, the Department Chair or Dean is responsible for notifying the Learning Systems team, via a Technology Services help request ticket.

D. Managing Requests for Elevated Privileges in Blackboard

1. Required Information for Elevated Privilege Requests
   - the requester must provide all information required by the VCU Blackboard System

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2. **User Agreements for elevated privileges**
   - prior to receiving an account and privileges, a User Agreement provided by the VCU Learning Systems department must be reviewed and signed by the requester; acceptance of this agreement indicates that the requester will follow all procedures, guidelines and responsibilities as documented
   - the User Agreement will be reviewed annually by the Learning Systems department and may be modified if needed; any modifications will be discussed with the account owner/requester, who must sign the revised agreement in order to retain their account and privileges

3. **Denied Requests for Elevated Privileges**
   After the evaluation and a decision has been made to deny a request, a Learning Systems Department representative will follow-up with the requester and provide the reason(s) the privileges will not be granted.

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**Related Documents**

1. **Adding an Instructor to Another Instructor’s Bb Course**

2. **The VCU Information Technology Policy Framework**
   This framework contains VCU Information Technology policies, standards and baseline requirements, all of which must be followed in conjunction with this Standard. The framework also includes information technology guidelines as recommendations and best practices.

**VCU University Computer Center IT Professionals Intranet**
Baseline documents can be found in under *Security Baselines*. Access to the IT Professionals Intranet requires approval. Requests for access can be made via email to uccnoc@vcu.edu.

**Key policies include:**

1. **Computer Network and Resources Use Policy:**

2. **Information Security Policy:**
3. Exposure and Breach of Information Policy:
   https://policy.vcu.edu/sites/default/files/Exposure%20and%20Breach%20of%20Information.pdf

4. Records Management Policy:

Revision History

This standard supersedes the following archived policies or standards:

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<td>01/03/2018</td>
<td>Replaces the Blackboard System Usage Policy (04/03/2014)</td>
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FAQ

There are no frequently asked questions for this standard.