

Getting Started with Blackboard Academic Suite

ELMS: Enhanced Learning for Maryland Students
Institute for Instructional Technology
Office of Information Technology

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Getting Started with the Blackboard Academic Suite

What is ELMS?

ELMS is the online environment that supports teaching and learning at the University of Maryland. As an acronym it stands for both the **Enterprise Learning Management System** that provides the architecture that houses course materials, as well as an expression of the mission of the environment: *Enhancing Learning for Maryland Students*. The **Blackboard Academic Suite** provides the infrastructure for ELMS.

What is Blackboard?

Blackboard is a course development tool for web based access to course materials such as syllabi, content materials, schedules, discussion groups, online quizzing, virtual classroom with online live chat, and more! The Blackboard Academic Suite is also a portal based tool. This means that, ultimately, ELMS will be able to synchronize with the university portal, and allow for consolidated delivery of online services. For now, a portal page means better synchronization of course content, easier editing, and customization of the ELMS space for the user.

Useful Information:

ELMS: Blackboard Login	http://elms.umd.edu
ELMS Email Support	elms@umd.edu
Directory ID Support	Helpdesk (Faculty) 301-405-1500 Helpdesk (Students) 301-405-1400
University Directory Password	https://directory.umd.edu
Instructional Design Assistance	elms@umd.edu
ELMS Training	http://www.training.umd.edu (see Institute for Instructional Technology) oit-training@umd.edu
General Bb Info	http://www.blackboard.com

Logging in to the ELMS Blackboard Environment

UMD Directory ID and password

Log in to the ELMS site using your University Directory username and password. If you do not know your Directory ID and/or password, go to the following site:

<http://directory.umd.edu>

If you continue to have problems with your Directory ID and password, contact the Faculty Helpdesk at 301-405-1500.

NOTE: For users who still have courses on WebCT, you will need to login to the WebCT site separately to access these courses at <http://courses.umd.edu> or click on the WebCT tab located on the <http://elms.umd.edu> website toolbar.



ELMS Login

Go to the ELMS website at <http://elms.umd.edu>, enter your University Directory username and password. Click on the button. You will see your Blackboard (ELMS) homepage. It lists all of the courses in which you participate and identifies the role that you play in each course.

ELMS Help Materials

Online Instructor Manual

- Located on the Control Panel under Help

Quick Tutorials (animated guides)

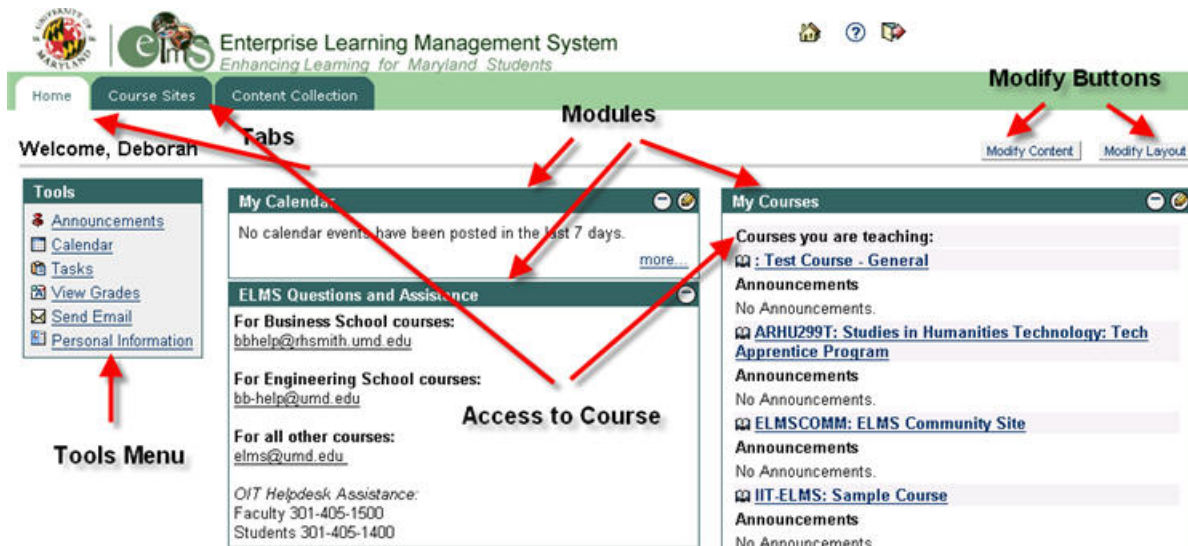
- Located on the Control Panel under Help

Behind the Blackboard

- Located on the Control Panel under Help
- Create a free account and gain access to additional resources

Browsing the ELMS Blackboard Environment

The ELMS Blackboard environment is a “portal” page. After you login, you will view your ELMS homepage (see below). (Note to current WebCT users, this homepage expands on the “My WebCT” page because it provides more than a list of courses.) The homepage is made up of tabs, modules, tools and buttons (for home, help, and logout) at the top and buttons to modify the interface on the upper right. Tabs, buttons and tools cannot be edited. However, modules can be edited, added and deleted from your homepage. (See Appendix A for tips on how to **Modify Your ELMS Homepage**.)



The **My Courses** module cannot be deleted from your homepage. It provides one of two paths to link you to the Blackboard courses in which you have a “role”; the other option for accessing your courses is to click on the **Course Sites** tab at the top of the window.

Course Roles

Course Roles control access to the content and tools within a course. Each user is assigned a role for each course in which they participate. For example, a user with a role of **Teaching Assistant** in one course can have a role of **Student** in another course. However, an individual can only have one role in any given course.

The Course Role is set when a user is “enrolled”. It can also be modified after enrollment from the Control Panel (which we will explore later).

- **Instructor:** Instructors have access to all areas in the Control Panel. This role is generally given to those developing, teaching or facilitating the class. Instructors can control when a course is made available to students.
- **Teaching Assistant:** Teaching Assistants have access to most features of the course space regardless of the status of student access to the course. Teaching Assistants cannot delete Instructors. Teaching Assistants are not listed in the Course Catalog listing for the course.

- **Course Builder:** The Course Builder role has access to most areas of the Control Panel. This role is appropriate for a user to manage the course without having access to student grades. A Course Builder can access the course even if the course is unavailable to students. A Course Builder cannot remove an Instructor. This would be an appropriate role to assign to an undergraduate student who is assisting the instructor with the development, uploading and integration of content.
- **Grader:** A Grader assists the instructor in the creation, management, delivery, and grading of Assessments. A Grader also assists the instructor with managing the Gradebook. A Grader cannot access a course if it is unavailable to Students.
- **Student:** Student is the default Course Role. Students are automatically loaded into the course when the Blackboard course space is created. Students have no access to any areas on the Control Panel.
- **Guest:** Users with the role of Guest have no access to the Control Panel. Areas within the course can be made available to Guests; however, at no time does a Guest have access to the Gradebook. Visitors such as prospective students, alumni or parents may be given the role of Guest. Note, however, that at this time, the role of Guest has not been defined and implemented in Blackboard.

Course Listing

As noted above, there are two ways to access your Blackboard courses:

- Click on the course link in the “My Courses” module on the homepage; or
- Click on the “Course Sites” tab at the top of the ELMS homepage.

All of the courses in which you are a participant are listed according to the role that you have in each course. Course Roles control access to the content and tools within a course. As noted earlier in this handout, each user is assigned a role for each course in which they participate.

1. Click on the **ELMS Training Course** link under the “Courses You Are Teaching” category in the My Courses module.

Looking at the Course Interface

The default entry point in any course is the **Announcements** page (for current WebCT users, think of this as your course “homepage”). This page default can be changed through the Control Panel, which we will explore shortly.

Links for Navigating Through the Course Space

There are several ways for instructors, students and teaching assistants to move through the course space. These include:

TABS – The tabs at the top of the screen are the same as those available on your personal ELMS Blackboard homepage. Click on the “Home” tab to return to your ELMS homepage and access other courses or ELMS modules.

COURSE Menu - The course menu on the left side of the screen is visible on every page in the course and enables the user to move about the course. This menu can be customized in the Control Panel (see below).

BREADCRUMBS – At the top of each page within the course is the “breadcrumb” trail of page links. To return to a previous page, click on the name of that page.

Control Panel

The Control Panel is only visible to instructors, teaching assistants, graders and course builders. All features of the Control Panel can be accessed by the instructor; users with other levels of access see selected areas of the Control Panel as authorized by the System Administrator.

Content Areas		User Management	
Course Information	Assignments	List / Modify Users	Enroll User
Course Documents	External Links	Create User	Remove Users from Course
Course Tools		Batch Create Users	Manage Groups
Announcements	Collaboration	Assessment	
Course Calendar	Digital Dropbox	Test Manager	Gradebook
Staff Information	Glossary Manager	Survey Manager	Gradebook Views
Tasks	Messages	Pool Manager	Performance Dashboard
Send Email	Content Collection	Course Statistics	
Discussion Board	Advanced Group Management	Help	
Course Options		Support	Contact System Administrator
Manage Course Menu	Course Copy	Manual	Quick Tutorials
Course Design	Import Course Cartridge		
Manage Tools	Import Package		
Settings	Export Course		
Recycle Course	Archive Course		

As you acclimate yourself to your Blackboard course space, there may be some modifications you wish to make during the early development phase, including controlling the overall availability of the course to students, selecting the default “homepage” appropriate to your use of Blackboard, and choosing a course menu design.

Course Availability

The student roster is automatically loaded into your ELMS course when the course space is created. However, students will not be able to access your course until you make it available using the Course Availability option.

Note: When the course is unavailable, Instructors, Course Builders, TAs, and Graders will still be able to access the course.

Checking and Changing the Status of Course Availability

1. Go the course **Control Panel**.
2. Select **Settings** under Course Options.
3. Click the **Course Availability** link.

4. Select *Yes* (it may already be selected), and click the **Submit** icon in order to make your course visible to enrolled students; select *No* if you do not want the course to appear in the students' My Courses area on the ELMS homepage.

It is very easy to forget about this, though, because the instructor can always see everything, even if it is unavailable or invisible. So, if you get a complaint from a student that something is not posted, and you're sure that you put it up, the problem is almost certainly that you forgot to make it available.

Set Default Entry Page

As was noted earlier, the default entry (or "homepage") page of a Blackboard course is the Announcements page. If you do not plan to post announcements or if you would prefer to make a specific content area available to students when they access your course, can you can the entry page.

1. From the Control Panel, click on the **Settings** link.
2. Click on the **Course Entry Point** link.
3. Choose from a menu of Entry Point options; these include any course area or tool that is currently available on the Course Menu.
4. Click on the **Submit** icon. The change will be immediate.

Course Menu Design

There is minimal customization for the overall "look" of your course space (in terms of colors, fonts, font sizes, etc.). However, you can select a style for the course menu that includes a preferred color and you can add a banner image to the "homepage".

1. From the Control Panel, click on the **Course Design** link.
2. Click on the **Course Menu Design** link.
3. Choose a format, button or text for the Course Menu and "pick" a color for the course menu background and menu text.
4. Click on the **Submit** icon.
5. Click on the **Course Banner** link.
6. Browse your desktop for an image (that must be a .gif, .jpg or .png format); e.g., locate the **webglobe.gif** file in the **ELMSTraining** folder.
7. Click on the **Submit** icon.
8. Click on your Course Name link in the breadcrumbs.

Announcements

Announcements can be viewed by day, week, month, or all. The sequential presentation of the announcements allows users to refer back to announcements in a logical order.

Announcements can be linked to the homepage under each course, or can be viewed via the Tools bar. New announcements are added through the Control Panel.

Adding an Announcement through the Control Panel

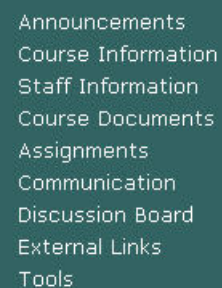
1. Click on the **Control Panel** link.
2. Click on the **Announcements** link under the Course Tools category.
3. Click on the **Add Announcements** icon at the top of the page:



4. Fill out the Add Announcement form. The only required field is to type in a subject. You can set availability dates for the announcement and even link it to another area of the course, so students can go directly to an assignment, discussion topic, or test.
5. Click on the **Submit** icon.

Adding and Modifying Content Areas and the Course Menu

Course Content areas are used to organize all course content materials. Course developers add materials to the Content Areas from the Control Panel or through their links in the Course Menu. In addition, Tools not already available via the Course Menu (e.g., Discussion Board, Chat, etc.) can also be added to the Course Menu.



A link to each Content Area creates the first level of the Course Menu directory.

You can *add or remove* Content Areas (or other resources) to the Course Menu using the Manage Course Menu tool.

1. Click on the **Control Panel** link.
2. Click on the **Manage Course Menu** link in the Control Panel Course Options category.
3. Notice the options you have for adding different types of links to your Course Menu:



- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Content Area: | a place where you can post announcements or documents. The existing Announcements, Syllabus, Course Documents, and Assignments links are examples of Content Areas. |
| Tool Area | a place from which Blackboard tools are linked. You can add a link directly to things that normally would be under the Communications or Tools menus (for example, the Email or My Grades tools). |
| Course Link | a link to another part of the course. For example, you could link directly to a Forum inside of a discussion. For instance, if you want a menu item called "Discussion of the Week," you could pick a discussion out and link to it from here, updating the link every week. |

External Link a link to an external web site. For example, in a finance course you might want a permanent link to the FTC's web site to always be handy.

Adding a Content Area

By default, a specific number of Content Areas appear in a course. Instructors can decide to add more Content Areas or modify existing Content Areas. For example, a Content Area for Assessments can be added and the name of the Assignments area could be changed to Homework.

Follow the steps below to add a Content Area:

4. Complete the Add New Area form. The availability of this area is also set on this page.
5. Click on the **Submit** icon.

Organize, Remove, and Modify Content Areas

The order of the items in the menu is set with the drop-down numbers in the left-hand column. Changing these numbers takes effect immediately; it's one of the few places you do not need to click **Submit** or **OK** to make something take effect.

The **Remove** icon on the right side of the screen will take a menu item out of the menu entirely. An alert window will pop up when you click the button to keep you from accidentally deleting something. To hide rather than delete a menu item, click the **Modify** icon and then uncheck "Make available for Student/Participant users." As an instructor, you will still see it, but the students will not.

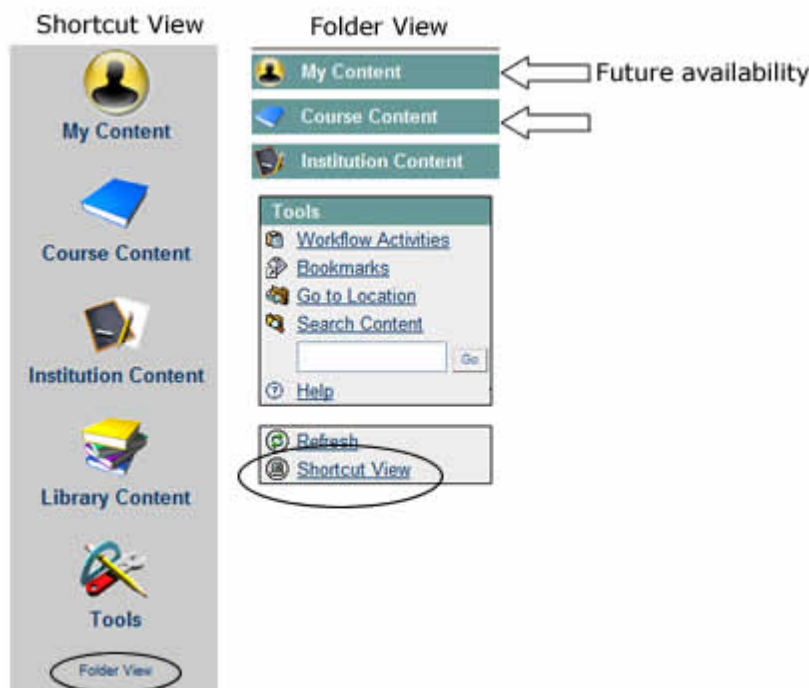
Modify lets you change the name of a link. For example, you could rename "Course Documents" to "Lecture Slides." In addition, the **Modify** command for some links lets you more finely control access to parts of your course site. For example, when you click **Modify** on the Communications link, you can enable or disable (show or hide) the different features under Communications.

Follow the steps below to modify a Content Area:

1. Click on the **Modify** icon to the right of a Content Area link (e.g., "Course Information").
2. Select the text you want to change in the text box below the Name: menu and type a new name (e.g., "Syllabus")
3. Click on the **Submit** icon.
4. Click on your Course Name link in the breadcrumbs to return to the course homepage. Observe the revised Course Menu.

Adding a File to the Content Collection

The Content Collection allows users to store, share, and publish content within personal user folders, course folders and institution folders. This chapter explains how to organize and manage content in ways that are beneficial to them and to other users in the system. The far left frame of the Content Collection page provides access to various file directories and a set of tools. You can select from two different views: Shortcut View on the left or Folder View on the left.



1. Click on the **Content Collection** tab at the top of the screen.
You will see two Content Collection repositories: Course Content and My Content.
 - a. The *My Content* area is the centralized file folder that is associated with your Blackboard user ID.
 - b. The *Course Content* area is the centralized file folder associated with the Blackboard course ID. For the purposes of this workshop, you will work in the Course Content area.
2. Click on the **Add Item** icon in the Action bar.*
3. Click the **Browse** button to locate your file; look in the **ELMSTraining** folder for the **syllabus.html** file. Select it, and then click the **Open** icon.
4. Determine your preferences for Lock and Comment options, and click **Submit**.
5. The file is now available to be used and shared among courses and user roles.

* For PC users: If you are using the Internet Explorer browser in Windows, you may click the **Web Folders** icon instead of the **Item** icon. The **Web Folders** icon will create a connection to your **MyNetwork** spaces area. Then, you can easily drag and drop (or copy and paste) single files or entire folders between you desktop and the Content Collection area. This feature will be covered in more detail in a separate workshop. For Mac users: If you are using

a Mac or other browser, when you click on the **Web Folders** icon, instructions for using WebDAV will display.

Multiple file uploads are discussed in Appendix B.

Adding Your Syllabus

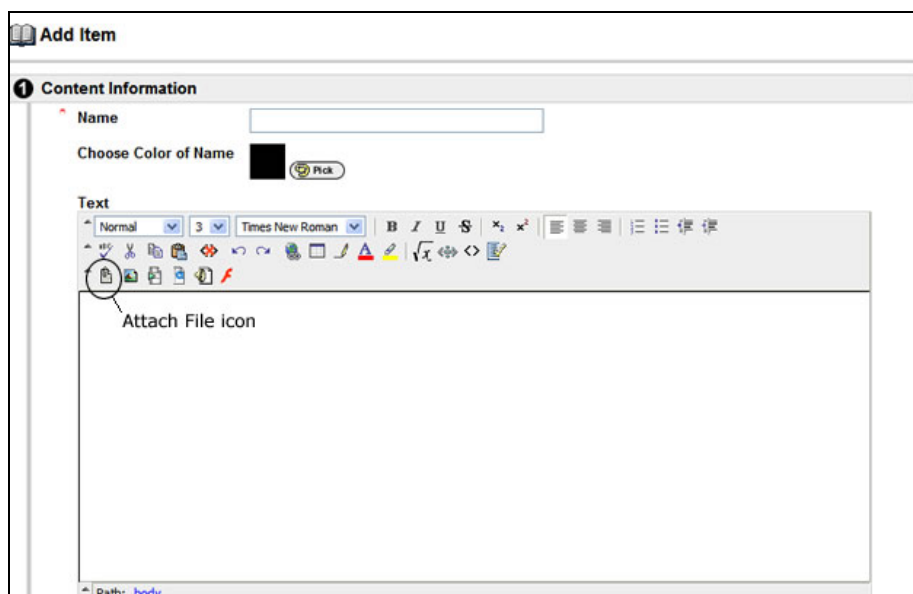
A Syllabus is a type of content that can be added to any Content Area. You may simply link to an existing document (“item”) that will serve as a Syllabus, or create a new Syllabus using the template provided. The Instructor can attach a file from their local computer, or link to a file in their “Content Collection”. Creating a new Syllabus allows the user to pre-build as many lessons as needed, or build lessons one at a time. Additionally, the user can apply custom designs to the Syllabus.

Most people prefer to link to a syllabus that they have already created (such as a Word document or PDF file). The following steps present the option to add a Syllabus to a course Content Area using an existing file, such as the one we just uploaded to the Content Collection. Blackboard refers to files as “items”.

1. First, click on the **Syllabus** link in the Course Menu.
2. Click the **EDIT VIEW** link in the upper right corner of the screen.
(*Note:* you could alternatively select the Course Information or Syllabus link from the Control Panel under the Content Areas category.)
3. Click on the **Item** icon.



4. Type in a name for the syllabus (e.g., “Syllabus 2006”).



5. Optionally, type in introductory text.

6. Next, click the **Attach File** icon in the Visual Text Editor toolbar.

Insert Content Link

1 Select Content Link

Browse

or Link from Content Collection

or Specify Source URL
For example, <http://www.myschool.edu/>

2 Content Link Options

Name of Link to File

Launch in new window Yes No

Alt Text

3 Submit

Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to quit.

7. Click the **Browse** icon next to *Link to Content Collection* item.**
8. Locate and select the radio button next to the file you want to add (e.g. syllabus.html)
9. Click **Submit**.
10. In step 2, Content Link Options, type the name of the link you would like your students to see (e.g., "Syllabus").
11. Click the **Submit** icon.

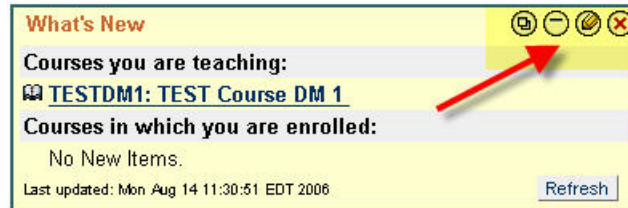
****Notes on Single File Uploads to an Individual Course Space:** Instead of placing file(s) in the Content Collection area, you *can* directly upload your file to the course space. Click on the **Browse** button next to the Browse box and search your local computer for the file. **Caution:** this method enables you upload a file directly; however, the file cannot be shared with other courses. To update the file, it would need to be deleted and then uploaded again. This is the way Blackboard linked files prior to the introduction of the Content Collection System.






Appendix A:

Modifying Your ELMS Homepage

Buttons on the Homepage Modules

The homepage features several modules. Most modules provide the following sets of buttons that enable you to modify the appearance of the module on the homepage:



- Delete  – Click on the red “X” to delete a module. If there is no “X”, then this module cannot be deleted. The ability to delete a module is set by the system administrator.
- Pop-up  – Click on the double paper image to see a pop-up of that module.
- Expand  and Contract  buttons – This is a toggle switch that enables users to show or hide modules that they do not use all of the time.
- Edit  – Features can be edited on select modules. For instance, on the “My Courses” module, you can select to display the following options: course name, course id, instructor name, tasks, announcements, events, etc.

Editing the Content and Layout of the Homepage (“Modify Content”)/ (“Modify Layout”)

The University of Maryland ELMS homepage is standardized for everyone who accesses Blackboard initially. However, there are many modules available with which you can customize your homepage, from a feed of *New York Times* headlines, to a calculator. To view the modules that are available:



1. Click on the **Modify Content** icon in the upper right hand corner.




2. The available modules are listed. Modules with a red checkmark cannot be deleted from the homepage.
3. Select a module by clicking in the checkbox to the left of the module name.
4. Click the **Submit** icon.

The layout and color of the homepage can also be customized.

1. Click on the **Modify Layout** icon.
2. In the “Personalize Page Layout” box, you can change the order of the modules in each column or switch a module between columns. Use the up/down or left/right arrows to move a module.
3. In the “Personalize Theme” box, you can select a color scheme for your homepage. This will not affect the Institution banner and color scheme at the top of the page, however. Click in the radio button to the left of the color scheme you wish to select.
4. Click the **Submit** icon to finalize the selection.

Appendix B: Uploading Multiple Files to the Content Collection

You can upload several files and folders to the Content Collection System at a time using the **Web Folders** option.  Web Folders uses WebDAV technology in which the Content Collection area becomes a network drive visible from the local desktop. With it you can drag and drop files between your local computer and your Blackboard Content Collection area. The Web Folders process works seamlessly with Internet Explorer. To use Web Folders with Firefox or Mozilla requires a few extra steps for set up, but it provides equally seamless drag and drop capability. Depending upon the time available at the end of the workshop, your instructor will demonstrate the use of Web Folders. The technology and the overall management of the Content Collection System is reviewed in detail in the “Managing Course Content and the Content Collection in Blackboard Academic Suite” workshop.