

Blackboard Course Management Guide

The guidelines presented in this document will assist in the prevention of technical issues and facilitate efficient management and delivery of course content in the Blackboard Learning Management System.

Saving Course Records

Courses are retained on the Blackboard system for only 18 months.

- Archive/export your course at midterm and after the final exam. This process will create a .zip file within your course. Save the .zip file to a backup drive, and then delete the .zip file from the Blackboard course. If you are working on a Macintosh and need assistance, please contact your Blackboard Coordinator.
- Keep Blackboard courses to a 250MB maximum. If the course goes over the 250MB limit, you will not be able to archive/import the .zip file. You can check the size of the course by using the “Disk Usage Report” from the course control panel.

Grades disappear if a student withdraws.

- If you wish to maintain a complete record of your grades, export your Gradebook weekly and after testing and save to a backup drive.

Efficiency

Uploading New Content

- To avoid extra strain on the system at the beginning of the semester, add content before the course begins and before you want students to see it. Then, set it as unavailable until it is needed. This avoids the rush and the possibility that you will have technical problems at the last minute.

Copying Content

- Courses for the next semester become available to instructors approximately 3-4 weeks before the semester begins. Whenever possible, copy existing course content into the course when it becomes available.

Blackboard course menus are defaulted to standard tool buttons.

- Customize the course menu to reflect only those tools you will use in the course. Doing this will reduce the course load time. Add tools and features as you need to use them during the semester.

Student File Uploads

- Use the Assignment Manager instead of the Digital Dropbox. Briefly, the Assignment Manager allows for students to upload assignment content within the context of a lesson and submission of the assignment can be tracked and is directly linked to the Gradebook. Please contact your Blackboard Coordinator for assistance with this tool.
- If you choose to use the Digital Dropbox, delete the files once you have downloaded and/or graded them.
- Request that students clean out their Digital Dropbox regularly to help Blackboard load faster.

Using Multimedia with Blackboard

- Avoid embedding video or audio into your course content areas or discussion board. Embedded video and audio files are downloaded each time the student enters that section, which may significantly increase the load time for the section. If you put a hyper-link to the video/audio, the content does not have to load each time, and you can use the web site's larger Internet bandwidth connection rather than the College's limited Internet bandwidth connection. Please contact your Blackboard Coordinator for assistance.
- If you have your own video/audio files that you want to incorporate into your Blackboard course, you can place them on the streaming media server (.wmv or .wma) or the Users server (everything else). Then, you can create a link to the file within your Blackboard course. Doing so will help cut down on the Blackboard server space that your course takes up, and decreases the strain on the Blackboard servers when you archive/import. Contact your Blackboard Coordinator for help with this process at least one week prior to needing links to your web content.

We are always happy to assist you with any questions or if you need additional assistance. Please contact your campus Blackboard Coordinator. Blackboard how-to's and updated documentation are available on the <http://stlcc.edu/blackboard> site.

http://stlcc.edu/blackboard/Faculty_Help.html - For Faculty

http://stlcc.edu/blackboard/Student_Help.html - For Students

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