

Mechanics

Format of the course in Blackboard is a key component of learner success. Established best practices for course menus, adaptive release, Blackboard access, adding files, and uploading materials into a course are detailed here.

First, instructors should explain the details of the course in an explicit format. Instructors cannot assume learners will understand or will intuitively find items that they seek. Blackboard will require that instructors build course structure with Folders and Items. For everyone's ease of use, instructors should follow a consistent format, organize following one convention, and name all items added or linked into the course with a consistent, explicit naming convention. Best practice is for instructors to organize materials in smaller sections using Folders or Modules, and name them consistently as: Chapter #, Unit #, Week 3.

- **Course Syllabus:** Use item, attach syllabus as a document. If changes are made to the syllabus you replace the file. Never use the Blackboard Syllabus Tool.
- **Organize Material:** Folders or modules, put like items together and be consistent. Use Weeks, Modules, or Units depending on how the course is organized already.
- **Make Available / Unavailable:** If learners should not see content or folder yet, make it unavailable. Instructors may wish to set a calendar alert for themselves to be sure to return to the item and make it available when learners should see it. Instructors may also choose to use the adaptive release feature in Blackboard so that learners who complete certain tasks and/or submit certain assignments are allowed to see and to engage with the next material.
- **Adding Items / Files / Modules:** The best practice for instructors and learners is to add materials into folders, to follow a consistent relevant naming convention, and to provide a set of clear directions for how learners will engage with the material and the tasks that they should complete. For each item, instructors should clearly communicate Purpose, Task, and Criteria for Success to learners.
- **Due Dates:** Online learning works best when instructors use Due Dates and maintain a consistent format. For example, "this assignment is due at 11:50:59 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1, 2020."
- **Date Restriction:** A powerful tool to determine what materials are available in an online course. Instructors may reveal all materials in advance, but this practice may increase learner anxiety and cause frustration. Date restrictions allow instructors to keep folders closed until learners need the material. For advanced users, it is possible to link assessments and assignments so that learners must complete an assessment or assignment before they can move ahead to the next section. In addition to date restrictions, the [Test Options](#) allow instructors to give extra time on these assessments for certain students or groups.
- **Access to Blackboard, Blackboard App, MySlice:** Some materials such as tests and quizzes do not work on mobile devices. Mobile devices switch towers and lose signals. While on a call or using text, a user may not notice these brief interruptions or may be able to recover without severe challenge. Blackboard, however, may lock a learner out of a test, recording that the learner has completed an exam when that is not the case. This action is meant to prevent learners from taking tests in multiple sessions or making multiple attempts on a single assessment. For these reasons, instructors should provide directions to learners to take exams on a computer with a stable connection. Instructors should also provide information to learners regarding whom to contact should learners find themselves locked out of an exam.
- **Course Performance Feedback through Orange SSuccess:** Instructors are encouraged to continue using Orange SSuccess to provide feedback (Kudos and Alerts) to learners throughout the course. This system activates support systems to encourage learners to perform at their best levels. In online courses, this support is an essential element to successful learner completion of courses. Instructors should continue to attend to the Kudos options and attend to Low Participation, Assignment Concerns, Low Quiz/Test Scores, and In Danger of Failing flags.
- **Organize:** Learners do best online when instructors make the course organization clear to them at the very beginning and when that organizational system follows throughout the entire course. Instructors should label folders, items, and other course materials in a consistent manner.
- **Structure:** Create the course for learners to follow. For example: all readings must be completed by Tuesday evening, with reading quizzes completed by 11:59:59 p.m. each week for class discussion on Wednesday; OR, discussion board entries must be completed by Friday at 11:59:59 p.m. weekly, and learners must respond to two separate discussion board posts by the following Tuesday at 6:00 p.m.

Sources and Relevant Links

- [About Blackboard](#)
- [How Instructor can use Blackboard](#)
- [Accessibility Features in Blackboard](#)
- [Blackboard Ally - Accessible Content](#)
- [Adjust Dates in copied courses](#)
- [Blackboard Content](#)
- [How to Make a Course Available](#)
- [Adaptive Release in Blackboard](#)
- [Accessing Blackboard](#)
- [Uploading a PDF File](#)
- [Zoom Webconferencing Getting Started \(JDi Program\)](#)
- [Uploading and Downloading Grades](#)
- [Adding Multiple files to My Course](#)
- [Adding an Item](#)
- [How to Upload Grades](#)
- [Adding Media](#)
- [About Organizations in Blackboard](#)
- [Uploading OIRA files to Blackboard Grade Center](#)
- [Adding Audio to a Content Area](#)
- [Getting Started - Faculty](#)
- [How to \(for Instructors\)](#)
- [Managing Users and User Roles](#)
- [Orange Success - Faculty and Staff Home](#)