University of Toronto
School of Continuing Studies

Experience Online:
Using the U of T Blackboard Learning Management System
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Using Blackboard

What is Blackboard?
SCS uses the Blackboard learning management system for delivering online courses. Many in-class instructors also use this system to complement their students’ learning experience. Blackboard courses can enhance course communication and collaboration, provide students access to a wide variety of course materials, and allow instructors to deliver online assessments.

Getting Access
For online courses at the School of Continuing Studies, students will receive a UTORid and Password to access Blackboard five business days prior to the course start. For those students who register after that period, access to Blackboard is given three business days after registration is complete.

Computer Settings

Browsers
To ensure compatibility with the various software technologies used in online courses, the following is a list of recommended operating systems and web browsers to access Blackboard.

Windows
- x86-compatible PC running Microsoft Windows XP / Vista (32-bit or 64-bit)/ 7 (32-bit or 64-bit). Be sure to update your Windows system regularly.
- Recommended Web browsers: Internet Explorer 8/9, Firefox 3.6 or higher. Do not use any Internet Explorer 64-bit version to avoid compatibility problems.

Apple
- Apple Macintosh running Mac OSX 10.5 “Leopard” or Mac OSX 10.6 “Snow Leopard”
- Recommended Web browsers: Safari 4.0 or higher, Firefox 3.6 or higher

Please note that Google Chrome is now supported by Blackboard. For an up-to-date list of operating systems and web browsers supported by Blackboard, please visit http://kb.blackboard.com/x/1IIQAw.

Pop-up Blockers
If you use a pop-up blocker in your browser like the one included with Internet Explorer, Firefox, or the Google/Yahoo toolbar, for example, please ensure you allow pop-up windows for the following site: https://portal.utoronto.ca.

If you are unsure how to disable pop-up blockers for specific sites, please consult your browser or toolbar Help Menu.
A Note about Viruses

It is strongly recommended that you have an anti-virus program installed on your computer. If you have an anti-virus program installed, it is very important to update the virus definitions frequently in order to provide yourself with the best protection possible.

How to log-in

1. Logging into Blackboard can be done through the U of T Portal Website: https://portal.utoronto.ca

   Or you can click on the Portal link located on top of the U of T home page.

2. Click the Log-in to the Portal button on the U of T Portal screen (refer to Figure 1).

3. Log in using the UTORid and password that was sent to you.
Once you have successfully logged on to the U of T Portal, the system should take you to Blackboard’s **My Page**. Your Portal page should look similar to the one shown in Figure 3.

4. To access your course, click on the course link listed in the **My Courses** module (refer to Figure 3).

5. If you entered the wrong course or would like to switch courses, click on the **My Page** tab button located at the top right of the screen.

Your course should look similar to the sample shown below:
Blackboard Features

- The **Announcements** folder contains time-sensitive information about the course, such as reminders of assignment due dates, content changes, and test deadlines.

- The **Orientation Material** folder contains information that orients you to the course, such as, the course outline, how to register for your Final Exam, your instructor bio and an introduction to Blackboard.

- The **Course Materials** folder contains all of your course content, such as lecture notes, weekly activities and work.

- The **Discussion Board** folder allows you to interact with your classmates. There may be topics on course-related subjects, or to ask questions on upcoming assignments, exams or course material.

- The **Tests & Exams and Assignments** folders are for any assessments used in the course.

- **My Grades** is where you can review your grades for the course. Please note that your Final Grade will not appear on Blackboard and will only be available on your Student Portal.

- **Links and Resources** contain U of T resources, School of Continuing Studies resources, Library Links, and “Where to Get Help” Links.

- **My Groups** folder will list any groups that you belong to in the course and any available tools.
Course Materials

Courses are broken down into modules, usually based on one-week blocks. Each module may contain the following information:

- Learning Goals/Outcomes
- Materials (PDF, .ppt files, video, podcasts, etc.)
- Activities and Weekly Work
- Discussion Board Forum Topics
- Weekly Letter with Notes, Links, and Guidelines

Accessing your course Materials

1. On the course menu, click on the Course Materials folder.

![Figure 5](image-url)
2. To access the materials, click on the module name.

Figure 6

3. To download the course material, click on the attached file.

Figure 7
Assessment Tools

For all the online courses offered by the Business and Professional Studies Program, students will be evaluated by the course work assigned by their instructors. The course work for each course usually involves assignments, tests, and a final exam.

Assignments

Students are expected to submit their assignments on their course sites, in Blackboard. The instructor will set up each assignment in a way which allows the students to upload their completed assignment.

1. To download an Assignment, click on the Assignment folder on the course menu.

2. Click on the title of the Assignment (refer to Figure 8).
3. Be sure to read the specific instructions carefully and note the assignment due date.

![Figure 8](image1)

![Figure 9](image2)
Submitting Assignments

There are two ways to submit your assignment depending on how your instructor organized the assignment

A: Submitting an Assignment as an Attachment

1. Click on the title of the Assignment.

![Figure 10](image1)

2. Click Browse My Computer.

![Figure 11](image2)

3. Locate the file on your computer and click Open.
4. Once you have attached the assignment file(s), click **Submit**.

![Figure 12](image1.png)

5. Review the Submission History and click **OK**.

![Figure 13](image2.png)
B: Submitting an Assignment in the Text Box provided

1. Click on the title of the Assignment (refer to Figure 10).
2. Enter assignment information into the text box editor provided (refer to Figure 14).

3. Click Submit.
4. Review the Submission History and Click OK.
Viewing your Assignment Submission

1. On the course menu click the folder **Assignments**.
2. Click the title of the **Assignment**.
3. On the Review Submission History page you can view the date(s) of your submission and any grade or feedback from your instructor (refer to Figure 16).

![Figure 16](image)

Tests and Surveys

Completing a test or survey in Blackboard can be made simpler by following the preparation tips:

- Ensure that your software is compatible with Blackboard
- Remove any adware, spyware and viruses form your computer
- Do not resize or refresh the browser during the test
- Turn off your toolbars or any other third-party browser extensions
- Ensure that your pop-up blocker is off
- Use a wired internet connection
- Use only one browser window
- Just before taking the test or survey, log out and log back into Blackboard
- Be sure to take any supplied practice test to familiarize yourself with online tests or surveys
Taking the Test or Survey

1. On the course menu, click on the Tests & Exams folder.

2. Click on the test or survey and wait for the page to launch.
3. Click the **Begin** button only once to start taking the test or survey.

![Image 19](university_of_toronto_school_of_continuing_studies.png)

**Figure 19**

4. Do not use the browser Back and Forward navigation buttons during the test or survey. Blackboard has separate navigation buttons.

5. Using the **Save Answer** button saves individual answers during the test or survey.

![Image 20](university_of_toronto_school_of_continuing_studies.png)

**Figure 20**

6. To finish the test or survey, click **Save and Submit**.
7. To confirm the submission, click OK
Discussion Boards

Discussion Boards are a tool within Blackboard where you can interact with the instructor and other classmates. Discussion Boards are organized by forums and threads. A forum is the topic of discussion; each discussion board will contain a number of forums. A thread is a single conversation (Message) on a specific topic (Forum). Within each forum, users can post and reply to threads or create new threads. You might be expected to create your own forum or to post threads into existing forums.

Accessing the Discussion Board

1. On the course menu, click the Discussion Board folder.

![Figure 22](image)

2. A list of the Forum(s) will appear on the Discussion Board page.

![Figure 23](image)
Post a Thread

1. On the Discussion Board page, click on the **Forum**.

![Figure 24](image)

2. On the **Forum Page**, click **Create Thread**.

![Figure 25](image)
3. On the **Create Thread** page enter a **subject** for your post.

![Create Thread Page](image)

**Figure 26**

4. Enter the **message** (refer to Figure 26).

5. If your instructor has enabled attachments, you can attach a file by clicking **Browse My Computer**.

![Attachments Page](image)

**Figure 27**

6. Click **Save Draft** to save your thread text (this will not post the message). Click **Submit** to post your message.
Reply to a Post

1. Click on the thread that you want to reply to.
2. On the Thread Detail page click **Reply**.

![Figure 28]

3. On the **Reply to Post** page, enter your reply in the Message box.

![Figure 29]

4. If your instructor has enabled attachments, you can attach a file by clicking **Browse My Computer**.
5. Click **Save Draft** to save your thread text (this will not post the message). Click **Submit** to post your message.
Groups

About Course Groups
Groups usually consist of a smaller group of users in a course, such as study groups or project groups. These course groups have their own area in the course to collaborate. These spaces are equipped with tools that can assist each group member. Within Group page, you may:

✓ Send email
✓ Exchange files
✓ Enter discussion forums
✓ Enter collaboration sessions
✓ Change the position of individual modules by dragging and dropping

You can provide your students with Communication and Collaboration tools that only group members can access, such as a private File Exchange area, a Group Discussion Board, and a Group Journal.

Accessing Groups
You can only access a group within a course, and there are several ways to access a group.

1. Below the Course Menu, a My Groups panel will appear.

![Figure 30](image)

2. Click on the Group Name to reveal all the tools that are available to that group (refer to Figure 30).
3. To access the Group Homepage, click **Group Homepage**.

**Figure 31**

**Group Homepage**

The Group Homepage is the centre for group activity and can contain a description of the group, a list of members, and tools (refer to Figure 32).

**Figure 32**
Group Tools

Each group has its own space in the course to work together. When inside the group, the students can find the tools that have been made available to them. Tools that can be made available to a group include:

✓ **Collaboration**: Users within the group can create and attend chat sessions and virtual classroom sessions.

✓ **File Exchange**: Group members and your instructor can share files in this area. All members, as well as your instructor, can add files. They can also delete files, regardless of who added them.

✓ **Group Blog**: In the group area, all members of a group can create entries for the same blog, building on one another. Any course member can read and comment on a group blog, but cannot make entries if they are not a member of the group. Your instructor can select the grade option for group blogs.

✓ **Group Discussion Board**: Users within the group can create and manage their own forums and discuss topics with only the group members.

✓ **Group Journal**: When used in the group area, all members of a group can view each other’s entries, but the group journal can only be viewed by the group and your instructor. Your instructor can select the grade option for journals.

✓ **Group Task**: Users within the group can create tasks that are distributed to all group members.

✓ **Group Wiki**: Users within the group can edit, and view their group wiki. Your instructor can view and edit a group wiki and can select the grade option for group wikis.

✓ **Send Email**: Users within the group can email individual members or the entire group.
Student Services

Blackboard Help
If you have difficulty in accessing your online materials, submitting your assignments or emailing your instructor, please email elearning@utoronto.ca or call 416-978-3880, allowing 48 hours for a reply.

If you any general questions, email us at learn@utoronto.ca, or call 416-978-2400.

Telephone Hours:
Monday – Thursday: 8:30 am to 6:30 pm
Friday: 8:30 am to 5:00 pm (September to June)
Friday: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (July to August)

Registering for your Final Exam
Complete the examination form included in the Orientation Materials folder and submit it through email to scs.dlp@utoronto.ca before the deadline stated on the form. We will acknowledge your request within two weeks of receiving it, and a reminder with information about the exam location will be sent to you two weeks prior to the exam date.

Grades
Final Grades will not be posted in Blackboard; if you have been assessed and awarded a final grade, you will receive a Grade Report documenting your final result. Grade Reports are issued and mailed within 60 days of the course completion. You may also view your final grade on your Student Portal.