

Course Content

A variety of items may be incorporated into the course Content Areas. Instructors access the Content Areas through the Control Panel to upload, organize, and manage course information, materials, assignments, and assessments. After entering one of the course Content Areas, such as the Course Documents area, instructors may perform the following tasks.

- ▶ **Add Item:** Select the **Add Item** button where text can be entered or files can be attached.
- ▶ **Add Folder:** Select the **Add Folder** button to create a new folder.
- ▶ **Add URL:** Select the **Add External Link** button to enter a link to an external website.
- ▶ **Add Course Link:** Select the **Add Course Link** button to enter a link to other items within in the course.
- ▶ **Add Test:** Select the **Add Test** button and select an existing test or create a new test.
- ▶ **Add Learning Unit:** from the drop-down menu, select **Learning Unit > Go**. Learning Units enable instructors to create course content that can be accessed by learners sequentially or non-linearly.
- ▶ **Add Survey:** from the drop-down menu, select **Add Survey > Go** and select an existing survey or create a new survey.
- ▶ **Add Assignment:** from the drop-down menu, select **Add Assignment > Go** to create an interactive assignment.
- ▶ **Add LRN Package:** from the drop-down menu, select **LRN Package Information > Go**. Microsoft LRN Packages enable instructors to create presentations that have a hierarchical structure and where learners access content sequentially.
- ▶ The **Modify** button next to any existing piece of content returns the user to the original creation form, thus allowing for the item's modification.
- ▶ The **Copy** button next to any existing piece of content, including Folders and Learning Units allow it to be copied or moved within the course. Note: Tests and Surveys may not be copied from this area.
- ▶ The **Describe** button will display if the **Add Metadata** option was selected when the item was created. This function allows users to include descriptive information related to a specific content item.

- ▶ The **Remove** button next to any item allows it to be deleted from the course. A pop-up window will appear to remind you that removing content is permanent.
- ▶ The **Order** drop-down menu appears next to each item in a Content Area. Users may use this function to resequence content items.

Adding Content

From the Control Panel, enter the Content Area where you would like to add material. After selecting **Add Item** the Add Content page will appear with four sections: Content Information, Content Attachments, Options and Submit. Similar features appear for all types of content.

Content Information

- 1 Select the Name from the drop-down menu that best describes your content or specify your own name in the text box.
- 2 Select **Pick** to select an alternate color. The default color is black.
- 3 Type or copy and paste content into the text box. Then select the text type from the following options:
 - ▶ **Smart Text** automatically recognizes and accepts HTML tags and links, and will prompt you to load images if an image source text is used.
 - ▶ **Plain Text** displays text as written.
 - ▶ **HTML** displays text as coded with HTML tags.
 - ▶ The **+** button opens the WebEQ Equation Editor. (See the *Blackboard 6: Equation Editors* tip sheet for more information.)
 - ▶ The Σ opens the MathML Equation Editor. (See the *Blackboard 6: Equation Editors* tip sheet for more information.)

Content Attachments

- 1 Enter the file path into the File to Attach text box or select **Browse** to locate the file you would like to attach. (See the *Types of Media* tip sheet for more information about file types recognized by Blackboard 6.) While many file types may be attached to course content, the user's ability to access those files will be determined by the user's computer configuration. As such, it is important to alert the learners as to the types of files attached in the course.
- 2 Enter the Name of the link that will be clicked by learners to access this file.
- 3 Select the Special Action from the following:

- ▶ **Create a link to this file:** Will attach the file to the item. The file will be accessed by clicking on the link that will be displayed below the item's title.
 - ▶ **Display media file within the page:** Will embed the file into the page rather than creating a link. This is recommended for media files (i.e., audio, video, graphics).
 - ▶ **Unpackage this file:** Should be used if the system needs to unpackage a compressed file before displaying it. Note: Blackboard will not recognize the Macintosh Stuffit file extension (.sit).
- 2 **Currently Attached Files:** Lists files that have been attached to this content item.

Options

- 1 **Do you want to make the content visible?** Select **Yes** to make the item available for learners to view or **No** to make the item unavailable.
- 2 **Do you want to add offline content?** Offline content is stored on a CD-ROM. Select **Yes**, and then enter the path to the specified file on the CD when prompted. Select **No** if you are not adding offline content.
- 3 **Do you want to track number of views?** Select **Yes** to track the number of times this item is accessed by users or **No** if you do not want this information kept.
- 4 **Do you want to add metadata?** Metadata is data about the content item, such as ownership, file type, copyright information, etc... If you select **Yes** the Describe button will be appear next to the item in the Content area. (See *Blackboard 6: Adding Metadata* tip sheet for additional information.)
- 5 **Choose date restrictions:** To limit the dates the item will be available.
- 6 Select the **Submit** button on the bottom of the page to enter your content information.

Adding a Folder

Folders can be used to structure course material in the Content Areas. After selecting the Content Area in the Control Panel, choose **Add Folder** and the Add Folder page will appear with three sections: Folder Information, Options and Submit. Once a folder is created any type of course content can be organized within it.

Organization

While folders / items may be moved after they are created, the structure should be carefully planned *before* loading materials into the course site. Examples of folder / item structure are:

- ▶ **Materials organized by instructional sequence:** Instructional content module - individual unit of content.
- ▶ **Materials organized by time:** Weekly materials - individual unit of content.
- ▶ **Materials organized by type:** Material type (assignments, readings, etc.) - individual unit of content.

Adding a URL

Some course material may sit elsewhere on the Web. Selecting **Add URL** from the Content Area in the Control Panel opens the Add External Link page with three sections: External Link Information, Options and Submit. External sites added to this area may be opened in a new window or displayed within the course's dynamic area.

Adding a Course Link

From the Content Area in the Control Panel, select **Add Course Link** to link to other items within the course. There are three sections to the Add Course Link page: Course Link Information, Course Link Attachments, and Options. This feature may be helpful to ensure learners locate important materials. An example could be linking to assignments or reading materials from the Course Information (Syllabus) area.

Adding a Test or Survey

Blackboard 6 provides users with a great deal of control over where links to tests and surveys appear. Within the Content Area in the Control Panel, select **Add Test** or **Add Survey** from the drop-down menu, to incorporate an online assessment to the course Content Area.

Of Note

- ▶ From any content area, select **Add Test** and then select an existing undeployed test or select **Create a new test: Create** to access the Test Canvas and create a new test (see the *Blackboard 6: Assessment* tip sheet for more information). To add a survey, select **Survey > Go**

and determine if you are using an existing undeployed survey or selecting **Create a new survey: Create** to access the Survey Canvas.

- ▶ Once you have a test or survey, created you will be able to modify the settings and the content but you will not be able to remove the item from the content area. Keeping a test or survey invisible will prevent the learners from seeing it, but it will remain visible through the Control Panel and in the Gradebook.

Adding a Learning Unit

Learning Units enable instructors to create course content that can be accessed by learners sequentially or non-linearly. From the Content Area in the Control Panel, select **Add Learning Unit > Go** and the Add Learning Unit page will appear with three sections: Learning Unit Information, Options and Submit. Once a Learning Unit is created any type of course content can be organized within it.

Of Note

- ▶ In the Options area, **Do you want to enforce sequential viewing of the Learning Unit?** Select **Yes** to ensure that learners view the content in the order listed. Learners will not be able to proceed without viewing the previous pages. Select **No** and learners can navigate through the contents in any order.
- ▶ In the Options area, **Do you want the Learning Unit to open in a new window?** Select **Yes** to open the Learning Unit in a separate window.

Adding a Assignment

Blackboard uses the term Assignments to describe two different types of assignments. Non-interactive Assignments is a default term Blackboard applies to one of the Content Areas. These assignments are static content and function like any other type of course content. Interactive Assignments created in any of the Content Areas by selecting **Assignments > Go** from the Add Ribbon area allow instructors to enter information, attach files, assign points and receive learner submissions. For more information about Assignments refer to *Blackboard 6: Using Assignments*.



Note Once a learner submits an assignment, Instructors access the file in the **Gradebook** area of the *Control Panel* and learners access their assignment by selecting the assignment from **View Grades** in the *Tools* area, or by viewing the Assignment again.

Adding a LRN Package

Microsoft LRN Content makes it possible for Instructors to create course content presentations that are hierarchal and that have sequential navigation. LRN Content can be developed using the Microsoft LRN toolkit (more information is available at <http://www.microsoft.com/elearn/resources.asp>, and on the *LRN Package* tip sheet).

From the Control Panel, enter the Content Area where you would like to add the content and select **Add LRN Package** from the drop-down. The Add LRN Package page has four sections: LRN Package Information, LRN Package Attachments, Options and Submit.



Important LRN Content files can only run on Internet Explorer version 5.0 or higher and Microsoft recommends Internet Explorer 6.0