# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roadmap</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.0 Student Experience</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring the My Blackboard Tab</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Course Environment</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessing Content in Content Areas</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the Tools Link</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Course Menu</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.0 Creating Your Course Menu</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning the Course Menu Links</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Edit Mode</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding Blank Pages to the Course</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating the Content Areas</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining the Content Organization</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding Items and Tools to a Content Area</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing the Items in a Content Area</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.0 Customizing Your Course</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Control Panel</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customizing the Course Style</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing Tool Availability</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customizing the Home Page</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding and Removing Modules</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reordering Modules</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing Notification Settings</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.0 Tasks

Creating Announcements .......................................................... 38
Adding Calendar Entries .............................................................. 40
Building Your Syllabus ............................................................... 42
Creating a Discussion Forum ....................................................... 44
Adding Textbook Information ...................................................... 46
Best Practice: Welcome Your Students ........................................ 50

5.0 Wrap Up .................................................................................. 50

Spotlight on your Course ............................................................. 51
Roadmap

2.0 Student Experience

- Explore the course environment
- Access course components
- Think of your students first

3.0 Creating your Course Menu

- Plan the links
- Add the tools
- Create the Content Areas
- Organize the links

4.0 Customizing your Course

- Customize course style
- Select tools
- Customize the Home Page

5.0 Day 1 Tasks

- Start from the beginning
- Make additions
- Welcome your students
1.0 Student Experience

*Exploring the My Blackboard Tab*

First, explore the contents of the *My Blackboard Tab*. It contains the *My Courses* module that lists all the courses to which you have access.

The *My Blackboard Tab* is a Module Page and contains individual boxes called modules. Modules help you organize information and links. A module can contain a tool, such as a calculator, or display dynamic information such as grades, alerts, and announcements. You can use the links in modules to navigate to areas in your courses.

Modules on the *My Blackboard Tab* collect information from all the courses you are enrolled in, giving you a total picture of news and activity for your courses. The following list includes some of the modules you may find on the *My Blackboard Tab*:

- **Tools**: View announcements and grades for all courses in which you are enrolled. Send email to members of any of your courses. View course calendar dates and tasks added by instructors and add your personal calendar events and tasks, which will remain private. Use the *Personal Information* link to access and edit the same personal information found in the *My Places* link in the header.

- **My Announcements**: Displays announcements for courses in which you are enrolled. It can also contain announcements from your institution’s system administrator. Announcements communicate important, time-sensitive information.

- **My Calendar**: Displays calendar dates for courses in which you are enrolled and any personal events you have added. You can add personal events when accessing the Calendar from the *My Blackboard Tab* and clicking the *Create Personal Event* link on the Action Bar. You cannot create personal events from the Calendar in the course environment.

- **Optional modules**: Add a module to view the list of available modules, such as
Dictionary, Report Card, and Notes. Descriptions are provided in the list to help you choose the most significant.

The Course Environment
You access a course by clicking its title on the My Blackboard Tab. Courses vary in design depending on the instructor, but there are some common features.

A. **Page header:** Identical to the page header you saw upon logging in, including the My Institution and Courses tabs.

B. **Course Menu:** The access point for all course content. Instructors decide which links are available here.

C. **Content frame:** Displays the selected tool or Content Area. By default, when you enter a course, the Home Page appears. The first page you see is chosen by the instructor and is called the course entry point.

Course Menu Views
Change what appears in the Course Menu and where the menu itself appears.
A. **List View**: Display the top level of the Course Menu only.

B. **Folder View**: Displays the entire hierarchy of material. Expand and collapse folders, and access links within folders.

C. **Display Course Menu in a Window**: Displays the Course Menu in a separate window. The window moves to a different screen location.

D. **Hide or Show Course Menu**: Collapse the Course Menu to focus attention on the content frame.

E. **Show and Hide Course Menu** in the sidebar: Hide the entire Course Menu so that the content frame fills the window.

F. **Go to Course Entry Page**: In the content frame, display the page chosen by the instructor as the starting point.

---

**Accessing Content in Content Areas**

A Content Area can contain multiple components. For example, an instructor may create a Content Area containing a week’s worth of course material, such as readings, an assignment, a discussion forum, and a URL.

To navigate Content Areas:

A. On the Course Menu, click the name of the Content Area. The content appears in the content frame.

B. In the content frame, click a link to access its content, such as a Discussion Board link or a file link.
The following table identifies some of the components of a Content Area. In this workshop, the word **item** is also used as a generic term meaning any one of the components added to a Content Area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>📂</td>
<td>Folder – further organizes content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📖</td>
<td>Learning Module – further organizes content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📖 🎨</td>
<td>Lesson Plan - combines lesson information with curriculum resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📧</td>
<td>Item – text or file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📣</td>
<td>Assignment – link to an assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📚</td>
<td>Course Link – link to a tool or other area in course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌐</td>
<td>URL – link to a website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🏛</td>
<td>Test – link to a test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📑</td>
<td>Survey – link to an ungraded survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🚚</td>
<td>Discussions – link to a Discussions forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📝</td>
<td>Blog – link to an individual blog entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📜</td>
<td>Journal – link an individual journal entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📚 📚</td>
<td>Chat – link to an individual chat session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>📚 📚</td>
<td>Wiki – link to a collaborative tool that you can contribute to and modify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Breadcrumbs**

As you view the items and links presented in the content frame, use the breadcrumbs to navigate to previous pages. In the following example, click the title of the course in the breadcrumbs to return to the course entry point.

**Using the Tools Link**

On the Course Menu, the **Tools** link contains links to all of the tools an instructor has made available in the course. Instructors can rename the link or remove it.

**QUICK STEPS: Accessing Tools**

**Using the Tools Link**

1. On the Course Menu, click **Tools**.
2. On the **Tools** page, select the name of the tool to access.

![Tools Link](image)

**Overview of Course Menu**

1. Plan the Course Menu links
2. Add the tools and Blank Pages
3. Create the Content Areas
4. Organize the Course Menu links

**2.0 Creating Your Course Menu**

**Planning the Course Menu Links**

The following table suggests possible starting points for determining what to add to the Course Menu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you want to provide</th>
<th>Add</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-click access to regularly used tools, such as the Discussion Board, Blogs, or Calendar</td>
<td>Tool Link to the specific tool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you want to provide | Add
---|---
Lecture notes or other reading material | One or more Content Areas to organize the material
A link to a regularly used website | External Link
An important file, such as a checklist, map, or image to which students need regular and easy access | Blank Page

**About Edit Mode**

As the Course Menu is created, you will work in **Edit Mode**. Edit Mode allows you to view all the instructor functions.

**NOTE:** In this workshop, the phrase “in Edit Mode” refers to **Edit Mode** being **ON**, showing all the instructor’s functions.

---

A. Click **Edit Mode** to change from **ON** to **OFF**. When Edit Mode is **ON**, all instructor functions are available. When Edit Mode is **OFF**, you see what students see.

B. When **Edit Mode** is **ON**, the Course Menu’s **Add Menu Item** function is available, which is shown as a plus sign. Use this function to add links to the Course Menu. Whenever you add a new link to the Course Menu, it appears at the bottom of the list. You will learn how to reorder the links later in this manual.
Adding Tools to the Course Menu

Add links to frequently used tools to the Course Menu. Consider the course content and the needs of the students when adding tools.

1. In Edit Mode, point to the plus sign above the Course Menu. The Add Menu Item drop-down list appears.
2. Select Create Tool Link.
3. Type a Name for the link.
4. In the Type drop-down list, select the tool to add.
5. Select the Available to Users check box.
6. Click Submit.

Adding Blank Pages to the Course

Add important information students need easy access to by adding it to the Course Menu using the Blank Page tool. The Blank Page tool allows you to add files, images, and text as a link on the Course Menu.

Add Blank Pages to the Course Menu for critical information, as too many links on the Course Menu can overwhelm students. Remove Blank Pages from the Course Menu as soon as the information is no longer needed.

1. In Edit Mode, point to the plus sign above the Course Menu. The Add Menu Item drop-down list appears.
2. Select Create Blank Page.
3. Type a Name for the link.
4. Select the Available to Users check box.
5. Click Submit. The Edit Blank Page appears in the content frame and the new Blank Page link appears last on the Course Menu.
6. Add information to the Blank Page at this time or click Cancel to add information later.

Creating the Content Areas

Typically, courses contain multiple Content Areas. Content Areas are containers for
several pieces of content, such as lecture notes, assignments, tests, tools, links to websites, and other materials.

You can delete or edit the default Content Areas and create new Content Areas.

The following table lists the four substeps for creating Content Areas.

**Determining the Content Organization**

In the following table, the arrow image indicates which substep is being described.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 3: Create Content Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE FOUR SUBSTEPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Determine how the Content Areas will be organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Add the Content Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Add items and tools to the Content Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Edit the items in the Content Areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organize your Content Area Content in various ways. Three common approaches include chronologically, by content type, and by subject area.

**Organizing Content Areas Chronologically**

In this approach, each Content Area contains a week’s worth of readings, assignments, lecture notes, and discussion forums. A Getting Started Content Area contains information about course policies, a syllabus, and other information students need at the beginning of a course.

A. Create Content Areas ahead of time. Set the availability to **available** or **unavailable** based on when you need the content. In the preceding example, Weeks 1 through 3 can be created and made unavailable until each is needed. The following image represents Content Areas organized chronologically.
Organizing Content Areas by Type of Content

In this type of organization, related types of content are grouped together in a Content Area, such as all the lectures for the entire course. A Content Area contains multiple items and multiple folders.

The following image represents how Content Areas organized by type of content.
Organizing Content Areas by Subject Areas

When content is organized by subject area, each Content Area contains lecture material and readings on a specific subject, along with assignments, discussion forums, and assessments.

The following image represents Content Areas organized by subject area.

QUICK STEPS: Adding a Content Area

1. In Edit Mode, point to the plus sign above the Course Menu. The Add Menu Item drop-down list appears.
2. Select Create Content Area.
3. Type a Name for the new Content Area.
4. Select the Available to Users check box.
5. Click Submit.
TIP: Create and make a Content Area unavailable to users until needed.

Adding Items and Tools to a Content Area
In the following table, the arrow image indicates which substep is being described.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 3: Create Content Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE FOUR SUBSTEPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine how the Content Areas will be organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add the Content Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Add items and tools to the Content Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edit the items in the Content Areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You have added Content Areas to the Course Menu. The next step is to add course materials and tools. The following list includes some of the items that can be added to Content Areas, if they have been made available to your course:

- Items, which can contain text, audio, movies, files, and images
- Individual tool links, Course Links, and URLs
- Individual audio, image, and video links
- Folders, Learning Modules, and Lesson Plans
- Assignments, tests, and surveys
- Mashups
NOTE: A Mashup combines elements from two or more sources. When you view a YouTube™ video in a Blackboard Learn course as part of the course content, you are experiencing a Mashup. Mashups can also include Flickr® photos and SlideShare presentations.

On the Action Bar, use the Build Content, Create Assessment, Add Interactive Tool, and Assign Textbook options to add materials to Content Areas.

The system administrator determines if other functions and tools are available to your course. Instructors also have the capability to determine tool availability in their courses. Tool availability will be discussed later in this manual in the Customizing Your Course section.

The following table summarizes the materials that can be added using each option on the Action Bar in a Content Area, if they are available in your course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area additions</th>
<th>Click</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item, file, or folder</td>
<td>Build Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL, Audio, Image, Video</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Module</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Link</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Page or Blank Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td>Create Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Content Area additions

- Self and Peer Assessment
- SafeAssignment
- Discussion Board
- Blogs
- Journal
- Wikis
- Groups
- Chat or Virtual Classroom sessions
- McGraw Hill Assignment
- Textbook information for your course

The steps for adding items and tools are next. Other types of content can be added in a similar fashion.

Adding Items to Content Areas

An item can contain text, audio, movies, files, images, and Mashups. If text is added, it can be formatted using the Text Editor functions.

QUICK STEPS: Adding Items to Content Areas

1. In Edit Mode, access the Content Area from the Course Menu.
2. On the Action Bar, point to Build Content to access the drop-down list.
3. Select Item from the Create column.
4. On the Create Item page, type the item’s Name and select a color for the name, if you want. Add optional instructions or a description in the Text box. Format the text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
5. To add a file, click Browse My Computer or Browse Course Files to locate the file. Add a Link Title for the attached file; otherwise the file name appears in the Content Area. Alternatively, you can use the Attach File function in the Text Editor.
6. Under Options, select Yes for Permit Users to View this Content to make the item
available to students. Select other options as needed.

7. Click Submit.

NOTE: In the Build Content drop-down list, additional content types are listed. Notice that Files, Audio, Image, Video, URL, and Mashups are listed, but can also be added using the Text Editor functions when adding a content item. The student view may be different depending on the method used, so experiment to determine which method meets your needs.

NOTE: Under Attachments, the Browse Course Files function takes you to a central storage location on the Blackboard server that is accessed directly from the course. Instructors can upload files to Course Files and link to them when creating course content. Within each course, Course Files displays content for that specific course, not
for other courses taught by the instructor. Any file uploaded from your local computer using the **Browse My Computer** function is automatically added to Course Files. This repository is not seen by students, but is available to instructors when adding content or by accessing **Files** in the Control Panel. Course Files is discussed in-depth in the manual, *Using Course Files*.

---

![Instructor view of a Content Area containing two items, each with a file attached](image)

**Adding Tools to Content Areas**

You learned earlier how to add tools directly to the Course Menu. Tools are added to a Content Area for students to use in conjunction with the content contained there. For example, if students create Blog entries related to the content, add the Blogs tool.

**QUICK STEPS: Adding Tools to Content Areas**

1. In **Edit Mode**, access the Content Area.
2. On the Action Bar, point to **Build Content** to access the drop-down list.
3. Select **Tools Area** from the **New Page** column.
4. On the **Link to Tools Area** page, select the tool and click **Next**.
5. On the **Create Link** page, type a **Link Name** or leave the default name.
6. In the **Text** box, type the text to appear under the link name in the Content Area. Format the text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
7. Under **Options**, select **Yes** for **Available** to make the tool available to students. Select other options as needed.
8. Click **Submit**.
Accessing Page Help

Turn Page Help on and off next to the **Edit Mode** function by clicking the question mark.

Information about the specific content you are working with is available at the top of the screen. You may also find additional information on the screen where you may need instructions for a field, such as how to type dates or remove an attachment. If no question mark appears, Page Help is not available.

**Editing the Items in a Content Area**

In the following table, the arrow image indicates which substep is being described.

After items are added to a Content Area, you can do the following:

- Edit an item’s name
- Edit an item’s availability
- Change the order of items
- Copy or move items
Edit an Item’s Name or Availability

**QUICK STEPS:** Editing an Item in a Content Area

1. In **Edit Mode**, in the Content Area, click the item’s Action Link to access the contextual menu.

2. Select **Edit**.

3. Edit the item’s **Name** or availability. Edit any attached content items if necessary.

**Change the Order of Items**

Add content items to a Content Area in any order and reorder using the drag-and-drop function. Each item has a move icon—a double-tipped arrow or handle.

**QUICK STEPS:** Changing the Order of Items in a Content Area

1. In **Edit Mode**, press the arrows next to the item. The item is highlighted.

2. Drag the item into the new location in the Content Area. The item is surrounded
by dashes as it is being moved into its new spot.

3. Release the item to place it in its new location.

Reorder with the Keyboard Accessible Reordering Tool

Use the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool to reorder items.

QUICK STEPS: Using the Keyboard Accessible Reordering Tool

1. In Edit Mode, in the Content Area, click the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool on the Action Bar.
2. Click the item in the list to select it.
3. Use the up and down arrows below the title box to adjust the order.
4. Click Submit. A pop-up box states: Items have been reordered.
5. Click OK.
Use the Hide/Show Details Button

If an item in a Content Area, such as an Assignment, Test, folder, or Content Item has a description, Instructors can use the Hide Details function to collapse the description to save screen space and allow for less scrolling to view the list of items. When a description is collapsed, it remains collapsed, even after logging out and logging in again. To expand the description, click Show Details.

The Students’ view of the Content Area is not affected. The descriptions do not collapse and Students do not have the ability to collapse descriptions for a folder or in a folder.
Copy or Move Items

Any Content Item, including URLs, folders, Learning Modules, Lesson Plans, Blank Pages, and Mashups can be copied or moved from one area to another area of a course. If the item is copied or moved to another course, both courses must belong to the instructor.

- Copying does not delete the content from the original location in the course.
- Moving removes it from its original location in the course.

The availability of the copy and move function varies depending on the content item type. For instance, Course Links can only be copied or moved to another area within the same course. Assignments, Tests, and Surveys cannot be copied, but can be moved within the same course.

QUICK STEPS: Copying Items

1. In Edit Mode, in the Content Area, click the item's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
2. Select Copy. If Copy does not appear, this option is not available.
3. On the Copy page, select the Destination Course from the drop-down list. The default setting is the current course. Only courses where the instructor has a role permitting copying content appear in the list.
4. Click Browse to select the Destination Folder.
5. For some items, select an option for Create links for items which cannot be copied. If the options are grayed out, links cannot be created.
6. Select the Copy Alignments option.
7. Click Submit.

If an item, such as a Learning Module contains items that cannot be copied within the course, such as a Test, a link is created to the Test. After the Copy action is complete, a message appears: "Some items copied. The following items were created as links:" and the specific items are listed.
QUICK STEPS: Moving Items

1. In Edit Mode, in the Content Area, click the item's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
2. Click the item's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
3. Select Move. If Move does not appear, this option is not available.
4. On the Move page, select the Destination Course from the drop-down list. The default setting is the current course. Only courses where the instructor has a role permitting copying content appear in the list.
5. Click Browse to select the Destination Folder.
6. Click Submit.
If an item, such as a Learning Module contains items that cannot be moved to another course, such as a Test, a message appears: "The move operation has completed but the following items could not be successfully moved." The specific items are listed.

**Add Subheaders and Dividers**

You can group your Course Menu links and add subheaders to each group of content to help students navigate in your course. Each subheader added appears with a divider line to help visually organize the links. You can also add individual divider lines, for example, if you choose not to add subheaders. The divider lines are used to separate the links into areas.

**QUICK STEPS: Adding a Subheader to the Course Menu**

1. In **Edit Mode**, point to the plus sign above the Course Menu. The **Add Menu Item** drop-down list appears.
2. Select **Create Subheader**.
3. Type a **Name**.
4. Click **Submit**. The **Subheader** is added to the bottom of the Course Menu and can be dragged into place.

A Divider is added from the **Add Menu Item** drop-down list also. The Divider is also added to the bottom of the Course Menu and can be dragged into place.
Rename Links

QUICK STEPS: Renaming a Link

1. In Edit Mode, click the item’s Action Link to access the contextual menu.
2. Select Rename Link.
3. Type a new name.
4. Click the check mark to Save or the X to Cancel. The new name appears on the Course Menu.

3.0 Customizing Your Course

In this section, learn about the choices for the Course Menu and other aspects of your course. Start by customizing the course style and choosing the default Course Menu and content view. Next, select the most appropriate page for the course entry point for your learners and customize it by adding a banner. Also, select which tools to make available to course members. Finally, customize the Home Page by adding, removing, and reordering modules.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Explain the features and functions of the Control Panel
- Customize the course style
- Select a content view
- Select the page for the course entry point
The Control Panel

Customize your course using the customization options on the Control Panel. The Control Panel is the central access point for course management functions and is not visible to students. The Control Panel is located under the Course Menu.

A. Expand each of the items on the Control Panel by clicking the double arrows pointing downward. The menu appears directly below the subheading. Select the option.
B. Alternatively, expand an item into the content frame by clicking the double arrows pointing right. Select an option.

**Customizing the Course Style**

Select **Style** from the **Customization** section of the Control Panel to customize the menu style and display, the default content view, the course entry point, and add a banner.

Customize the course style in the following ways:

A. Display the links on the Course Menu as text or buttons.
B. Select a default view for the Course Menu: Folder View or List View.

C. Select a default content view: Icon Only, Text Only, or Icon and Text.

D. Change the course entry point. The course entry point is the first page students see when entering the course. The default course entry point is the Home Page. Select the new entry point from the drop-down list. Any link that appears on the Course Menu can be the course entry point.

E. Add a banner to the top of the course entry page. The banner can be a text phrase or an image. The image needs to be in .png or .jpg format and approximately 480 x 80 pixels.

**NOTE:** Banner images must be uploaded from your local computer; however, a copy is stored in Course Files with each new upload. If you delete the image from the course entry page, the image file remains in Course Files. Keep in mind that users can resize their browser windows, expand and collapse the Course Menu, and use monitors of varying sizes and screen resolutions. After uploading a banner, view it under those varying conditions to ensure that it looks as intended.

**Changing Tool Availability**

Select which tools are available in your course and which users have access to them. For example, if the Messages tool is not used, make it unavailable. No one can see it or access it, including the instructor, until it is available again. Available tools are listed alphabetically on the **Tool Availability** page.

**NOTE:** The system administrator can turn off select tools, making those tools unavailable for use in your courses. The system administrator can also remove the instructor’s ability to choose who has access to select tools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool State</th>
<th>Description of State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available</td>
<td>The tool is available throughout the course and open to all users having a role permitting use of the tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible to Guests</td>
<td>The tool is visible (read-only), but not usable to Guests, when Guests are permitted into the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible to Observers</td>
<td>The tool is visible (read-only), but not usable to Observers, when Observers are permitted into the course.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Available in Content Areas

The instructor can place a link to the tool in one or more Content Areas in the course.

If a tool is unavailable, the tool’s content is not deleted. Once the tool is available again, the content becomes available.

QUICK STEPS: Changing Tool Availability

1. On the Control Panel, select Customization.
2. Select Tool Availability.
3. On the Tool Availability page, make the availability adjustments required.
   - To make a tool Available, select the tool’s check box.
   - To make a tool unavailable, clear the tool’s check box.
4. Click Submit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Available</th>
<th>Visible to Guests</th>
<th>Visible to Observers</th>
<th>Available in Content Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive Previews</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard Scholar</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank Page</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEGEND:

Filled check box: System administrator made the tool unavailable.

Hyphen: Availability settings in the system cannot be changed.

Customizing the Home Page

Earlier, you explored the student view of the Home Page. The Home Page is a Module Page, which is a specialized content page that presents information in discrete boxes. By default, a new course’s Home Page contains the following modules:

- My Announcements
The instructor chooses the page layout and modules available from a pool of modules managed by the system administrator. Other types of content cannot be added to the Home Page or other Module Pages. For example, you cannot add a tool link on a Module Page.

**Adding and Removing Modules**

A variety of modules can be added to the Home Page. Use the following table to decide which modules are appropriate for your course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Add</th>
<th>If you want to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alerts</td>
<td>Receive notifications of past due and early warning items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add</td>
<td>If you want to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculator</td>
<td>Provide a calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary</td>
<td>Allow users to search for terms in the <em>American Heritage Dictionary</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Announcements</td>
<td>Display current announcements with links to the Announcements tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Calendar</td>
<td>Display current calendar events with links to the Calendar tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Tasks</td>
<td>Display current tasks with links to the My Tasks tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs Attention</td>
<td>Receive notifications of items needing attention, such as items to be graded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Card</td>
<td>Display the student’s grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textpad</td>
<td>Type plain text or HTML for display on the page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesaurus</td>
<td>Allow users to search for synonyms using <em>Roget’s II: The New Thesaurus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Do</td>
<td>Display items due and past due with links to the items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s New</td>
<td>Display items recently added with links to the items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TIP:** The *Alerts* and *Needs Attention* modules contain instructor-oriented information. If the modules are included, students will see them on the Home Page, but they will contain no information. To minimize confusion, you can create a separate Module Page on the Course Menu containing these modules. Since this Module Page is only for your use, make it unavailable to students.

If a module with content is removed, when the module is added again, the content is regenerated.
QUICK STEPS: Adding Modules

1. In Edit Mode, access the Home Page.
2. Click Add Course Module on the Action Bar.
3. On the Add Module page, click Add for each Module.
4. Click Submit.

While viewing the Home Page in Edit Mode, remove a module by clicking Close, represented by the X.

Reordering Modules

You can change the module order so the most important modules appear near the top of the Home Page. Use the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool or the drag-and-drop function to reorder the modules.
A. Access the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool on the Action Bar.

B. In addition to the up and down move arrows, the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool also has arrows to move modules right or left between the two columns on the Home Page.

C. Point to the top of a module to access the move icon, which consists of four arrows. Press and move the module to a new position on the page.

**Editing Notification Settings**

You can select which items will appear in the following notification modules: What’s New, To Do, Alerts, and Needs Attention. Customizing these notifications will not affect the students’ notification settings.

Depending on administrator settings, the following items may be included:

- Announcement Available
- Assignment Available, Due, Past Due, or Submitted
- Content Item Available
- Early Warning System Rule Details
- Item Due or Graded
- Survey Available, Due, Overdue, or Submitted
- Test Available, Due, Overdue, or Submitted
- Unread Blog Posts
- Unread Discussion Board Messages
- Unread Journal Entries

**QUICK STEPS: Editing Notification Settings**

1. In **Edit Mode**, access the **Home Page**.
2. In one of the notification modules, click **Edit Notification Settings**.
3. On the **Edit Notification Settings** page, select the link to the course.
4. On the **Current Notification Setting** page, in the **Dashboard** column, select the check boxes of the items to appear or clear the check box of an item not needed.
5. In the **Email** column, select the check boxes for the items to which you want to receive an email notification; clear the check boxes if you do not need an email notification.
6. Click Submit.

The system administrator determines if the Email option is available.

4.0 Tasks
In this section, complete some common activities to prepare your online course for students. First, create a welcome announcement and add calendar entries for upcoming events. Then, finish the Getting Started Content Area created earlier by adding syllabus lessons, creating a discussion forum where students can pose questions, and adding textbook information.

Learning Objectives
After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Create an announcement
- Add calendar entries
- Add syllabus lessons
- Create a discussion forum
- Add textbook information

Creating Announcements
Use the Announcements tool to provide students with course reminders and updates.
Announcements can contain text, images, and multimedia, as well as links to course content. If the Home Page includes the What’s New and To Do modules, students will already be alerted to new content, assignments, and discussion posts. Therefore, consider creating announcements only for items that will not appear in the modules.

New announcements appear directly below the repositionable bar entitled "New announcements appear below this line." To pin an announcement to the top of the list, drag it above the repositionable bar. This will keep the announcement at the top of the list and prevent new announcements from superseding it.

**NOTE:** When performing the instructor functions, ensure Edit Mode is ON.

**QUICK STEPS: Creating an Announcement**

1. On the **Control Panel**, under Course Tools, select **Announcements**.
2. On the **Announcements** page, click **Create Announcement** on the Action Bar.
3. On the **Create Announcement** page, type the **Subject** and an optional **Message**. Format the **Message** text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
4. Under **Web Announcement Options**, select **Not Date Restricted** — visible until manually removed, or **Date Restricted** — visible only within selected dates and times.
5. If **Date Restricted**, select the **Display After** and **Display Until** check boxes and type the dates and times.
6. Optionally, under **Course Link**, click **Browse** to create a link from the announcement to a course item. Select the course item from the pop-up Course Map.
7. Click **Submit**.
The Subject becomes the title of the announcement on the Announcements page. In the Message text box, you can add text, images, multimedia, and links using the Text Editor functions.

Select the **Send a copy of this announcement immediately** check box if you want to send students an email containing the announcement. The email is sent to all students, even those that chose not to receive announcement notifications through email.

**Adding Calendar Entries**

Use the Course Calendar to provide students with dates for important events. Course Calendar Events appear to all members of the course. Common entries include
upcoming tests, due dates for assignments, or special lectures. Due date notifications also show in the What’s New and To Do modules. However, due date notifications can be turned off by students, so be sure to let them know if you are relying on those modules to remind them of due dates.

QUICK STEPS: Adding a Calendar Entry

1. On the Control Panel, under Course Tools, select Course Calendar.
2. On the Course Calendar page, select a Calendar view: Day, Week, Month, or Year.
3. Click Create Course Event on the Action Bar.
4. On the Create Course Event page, type the Event Name and Event Description. Format the Event Description text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
5. Type the Event Date. Optionally, click the pop-up Date Selection Calendar to select the date.
6. Type the Event Start Time and Event End Time. Optionally, click the pop-up Time Selection Menu to select the times.
7. Click Submit.
The Event Name will appear as the link on the Course Calendar. Click the link to display the Event Description. There is a 4,000 character limit for Event Descriptions.

**Building Your Syllabus**

Earlier you added a syllabus to the **Getting Started** Content Area. Now, return to the syllabus to add information about each week's lessons.

**QUICK STEPS: Building the Syllabus**

1. On the **Course Menu**, click **Getting Started**.
2. Click the syllabus’s Action Link to access the contextual menu.
3. Select **Edit**.
4. Click **Add Lesson** on the Action Bar.
5. On the **Edit Lesson** page, type the **Lesson Title**.
6. If applicable, select a specific Lesson Date and Time.
7. In the **Lesson Description** text box, type information. Format text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
8. Click **Submit**.
9. To add more lessons, repeat steps 4–8.
10. Click **OK**.

**NOTE:** Click **Edit** from the contextual menu of a Syllabus to access all your Syllabus lessons. Each lesson has its own Action Link to edit it.
Creating a Discussion Forum

Earlier you added a link to the Discussion Board from the Getting Started Content Area. Now, create a discussion forum.

QUICK STEPS: Creating a Discussion Forum

1. On the Course Menu, click Getting Started.
2. Click the Discussion Board link in the Content Area.
3. On the Discussion Board page, click Create Forum on the Action Bar.
4. Type a Name. Users will click the forum name to access the forum.
5. Optionally, type instructions or a description in the Description text box. Format the text using the Text Editor functions, if you want. The Description will appear below the forum name.
6. Under Forum Availability, select the Yes option.
7. Select Forum Settings.
8. Click Submit.
The Discussion Board can also be accessed from Course Tools on the Control Panel or from a Discussion Board link you add to the Course Menu. The process for creating forums is the same regardless of how the Discussion Board is accessed.

TIP: All forums needed for the term can be created in advance and the Forum
Availability can be set to No until they are needed.

**Adding Textbook Information**

You can create items in a Content Area for each textbook used in your course. The Search for Textbook tool enables you to search an external source for textbooks by ISBN, title, author, or subject. You can also add textbook information manually.

When textbook information is added to a course, it is also added to the Course Catalog where perspective students can access this information prior to enrollment.

**NOTE:** The system administrator determines if the Search for Textbook tool is available. If available, you can turn this tool on and off from the Control Panel > Customization > Tool Availability. When this tool is disabled, you will not see Assign Textbook on the Action Bar in a Content Area.

**QUICK STEPS: Adding Textbook Information**

1. Access the Content Area where the textbook information will appear.
2. Point to Assign Textbook on the Action Bar to access the drop-down list.
3. Click Search for Textbook.
4. On the Search for Textbook page, use the drop-down lists and type Keywords to search for a textbook.
5. Click Go.
Use the drop-down lists and type Keywords to search for textbooks.

After clicking Go, your search results appear.
A. Sort your results using the **Sort By** drop-down list, which includes sorting by ISBN, Title, Author, Publisher, or Price.

B. The number of items found appears.

C. Navigate to other results pages using the arrows.

D. Click **Select** next to the appropriate textbook information. You must create the **Create Textbook** page before the item is added.

---

A. On the **Create Textbook** page, select whether a textbook is required or recommended.

B. Type an optional **Description**, which will appear below the textbook title in the Content Area. Descriptions have a 255 character limit.

C. Under **Options**, select **Yes** to **Permit Users to View this Content**.

D. Click **Submit** to add the textbook information to the Content Area or **Submit and Add Another** to add more textbooks.
NOTE: The pre-filled information on the Create Textbook page is not editable because it comes from external data. You can edit the Description at any time.

If a search does not provide your textbook, you can type information in the provided fields on the Manual Entry Textbook page. This information is editable at any time. Any text boxes without information will not appear in the Content Area; however, the Title is required.

Optionally, include an image of the book by clicking Browse My Computer or Browse Course Files to locate the file. If an image is not uploaded, a default is used.
**Best Practice: Welcome Your Students**

Your students' first impressions will influence their opinions and attitudes about your course.

- Let students know you are glad they are here. An inviting tone—somewhat informal, but still professional—is equivalent to a smile and a greeting to a student who walks through the door in a traditional class.
- Think about how your students might feel when they enter your course for the first time. To put students at ease, include the following:
  - A welcoming message and brief self-introduction
  - Specific instructions on how to begin the course
  - Icebreakers to build a sense of camaraderie and community

**5.0 Wrap Up**

The Workshop Wrap Up provides the opportunity to reflect on what you learned by focusing your attention on the key concepts presented in the workshop. Also, the next page includes a worksheet for brainstorming some ideas about how to get started in your online course.

In this workshop, you learned how to do the following:

- Log in to Blackboard Learn and explain the information available on the My Blackboard Tab
- Add, remove, and reorder modules on the Home Page
- Add and access content and tools from the Course Menu and Tools link
- Explain the steps for planning, creating, customizing, and editing the Course Menu
- Describe strategies for planning Content Areas and organizing the content
- Create Content Areas and add course materials and tools
- Edit, reorder, copy, and move Content Area items
- Explain the main functions of the Control Panel used to customize the course style
- Select the default Course Menu view: List View or Folder View
- Select the course entry point and add a banner to it
- Change tool availability
- Edit the notification settings
- Create announcements, calendar entries, syllabus lessons, and discussion forums
- Add textbook information to your course

**Spotlight on your Course**
Do you have some ideas about getting started? Use the following worksheet to record your plans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas to consider</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How will you organize your Content Areas?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Will you organize by subject, chronology, or type of content?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Will you link to tools from Content Areas or have students access tools from the Course Menu or Tools link?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Will you add an existing Syllabus or use the Syllabus Builder option?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Will you customize your course?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Will you change the Course Menu style or colors?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Will you change the course entry point?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What Day 1 tasks are important for your course?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Will you create a welcome announcement for students?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What initial events do you want to add to the Course Calendar?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Will you create a discussion forum to allow students to pose questions or issues related to the course and online learning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Will you search for textbook information to add to your course?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>