

Blackboard Ultra Quick Start Guide

Getting Started with Blackboard Ultra

Blackboard Ultra is the enhanced version of Blackboard's Learning Management System (LMS), designed to support a more intuitive, accessible, and student-centered teaching experience. With its modern interface and mobile-friendly design, Ultra simplifies course management while enriching the learning environment. This guide is crafted to help faculty and staff navigate key features of Blackboard Ultra, such as course setup, content delivery, communication tools, accessibility options, and system integrations through both practical steps and pedagogical insights.

Blackboard Learn Ultra Course Planning Checklist

Request a Blackboard Ultra Course Site

Blackboard serves as BU's central learning platform, offering a unified space for course materials, assignments, communication, and grading. Use the "[Blackboard Course Selection](#)" tool in MyBU to request your course site. If you'd like to explore Blackboard Ultra before launching your course, you can request a sandbox environment by emailing ithelp@bu.edu.

Select Blackboard Course View

Blackboard Original will be retired by December 2026; therefore, Blackboard Ultra is the recommended, modern version with a streamlined interface, mobile responsiveness, and ongoing updates. For a future-ready course experience, we recommend building your course in Ultra. To explore key features and benefits of Blackboard Ultra, please view [Key Features of Blackboard Ultra](#) on the Institute for Excellence in Teaching & Learning's website.

Reuse Content from Previous Courses

You can carry over content from past semesters. To copy from Original to Ultra, use the [Blackboard Course Copy Tool](#). To copy from Ultra to Ultra, use the [Copying Content in Ultra](#) feature within your Ultra course interface.

Apply Course Layout

Organizing your course thoughtfully supports student success and enhances the overall learning experience. By using **folders** and **modules** as your primary tools for structure, you can align your course layout with your instructional goals and help students navigate content with ease. Consider the following organizational models and reflect on which best supports your course design:

- **Time-based** (for weekly/session structure): Structure content by week or session to guide students through the course chronologically.

- **Content-based** (for topic-driven progression): Organize by topic or unit to scaffold learning and build conceptual understanding.
- **Document-based** (for quick-access folders): Use labeled folders to provide quick, intuitive access to course materials.

For additional guidance on course layout options, please visit the [Structuring Your Course in Ultra](#) page on the Institute for Excellence in Teaching & Learning's website.

Access Your Course

You can find your courses under the **Courses** tab on the BU Blackboard site. Note that courses are organized by terms, which you can navigate to via arrows or dropdown menus.

1. Log in to learn.bu.edu using your BU login name and Kerberos password.
2. On the Navigation menu (left-hand side), click the **Courses** icon and text.
3. Use the **List** or **Grid** view to display courses in a way that works for you.
4. You can navigate to upcoming courses or non-academic courses via the dropdown menu or arrow navigation at the top of the page.
5. You can search for classes in the **Search Box**.
6. You can favorite classes by clicking the **Star** icon next to them.

Manage Course Access

Before students can access your course, it must be made available. During the course design phase or after the course has concluded, you may choose to keep it unavailable. This allows you to manage student access intentionally, ensuring they engage with a fully prepared and purposeful learning environment.

1. In your Blackboard course, at the top of your course, you can manage course access state settings through the **Course Settings** page.
2. Select **Open**. Students have access to the course content within the course duration timeframe.
3. At the top of your course, next to Course Settings, an indicator displays Open, Closed, or Complete based on the course state. Your students also see this indicator at the top of the course.

Post an Announcement

Announcements are a valuable instructional tool for keeping students informed and engaged. Use them to communicate time-sensitive updates, such as upcoming deadlines, schedule changes, or important reminders, ensuring that learners stay on track and feel supported throughout the course.

1. In your Blackboard course, on the Announcements page, select the **Create Announcement** button that appears as a **Plus (+)** icon to create a new announcement. You can only send an announcement to all members of the class.

2. Enter a title and message for the announcement. Use the options in the message editor to format text, embed multimedia, and attach files. You can insert audio and video recordings into your course announcements.
3. You can also send an email copy to all course members, including yourself. Select **Send an email copy to recipients**. Recipients must have a valid email address in the system.
4. Select **Save draft** to save your announcement as a draft. If you're ready to send out the announcement now, select **Post**. You can post draft announcements by selecting Post now on the Announcements page.

Add Course Content

To add content to your course, module, or folder, simply hover your cursor over the desired area and click the **Plus (+)** icon. This intuitive action allows you to build and organize materials in a way that supports your instructional goals and enhances student engagement.

In your Blackboard course, hover your cursor over the area where you are adding the content and click the **Plus (+)** icon.

- To build a document, add a link, connect an educational technology (LTI), or upload a SCORM package, click **Create**.
- To upload content from your computer, click **Upload**.
- To upload content from an external location, select the appropriate source.
- To place content inside a folder or learning module, it must be opened first.

For more detailed guidance on adding course content, please visit the [Develop Course Content](#) page on TechWeb.

Progress Tracking

Progress Tracking is a function available in Blackboard Learn Ultra courses that you can turn on to give your students an easy way to keep track of what they've done in your course.

Turn progress tracking on for your course:

1. In your Blackboard course, on the right-hand menu under **Details & Actions > Progress Tracking**, select **Turn on**.
2. Once the Progress Tracking panel opens, switch the toggle from Off to **On**.
3. Save your new settings.

View Roster & Set Accommodations

Instructors can view the full course roster, add additional instructors or course builders, and set up accommodations to support individual student needs. Accommodations, such as extended time assessments, are applied once and automatically carried over to all relevant course activities, helping to ensure equitable access to learning for all students.

Blackboard Ultra Quick Start Guide

1. In your Blackboard course, on the right-hand menu under **Details & Actions**, you will see **Rosters**. Click on **View everyone in your course**.
2. Instructors can add additional people to the course by clicking the **Plus (+)** icon in the upper-right corner.
3. To add accommodation to a student, click the **Three Dots (...)** to the right of the student's name and select **Accommodations**. In the panel, set **Due Date** and **Time Limit** for accommodations as per Accessibility Services.

Get Additional Support

To explore the best strategies for transitioning your course to Blackboard Ultra, we encourage you to consult with our Academic Technology & Innovation support team (CRC) or educational technologists (BUMC). This collaborative conversation can help you align your course design with Ultra's features and ensure a smooth transition.

To schedule a consultation, please submit a request by emailing:

- askedtech@bu.edu (CRC)
- edtechhelp@bu.edu (BUMC)

In your message, kindly include the following details to help us prepare for your session:

- The course name and course ID of your current Blackboard Original course
- The course name and course ID of your new Ultra course (if already created)
- Your preferred date and time for a meeting (in person or online)