Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center
Blackboard Ultra *Getting Started* Quick Guide

Getting Started with Blackboard

Blackboard is a course management system used campus-wide at NIU. The system allows faculty to post course materials, deliver tests and surveys, hold online discussions, and facilitate many other course-related functions.

Accessing Blackboard at NIU

1. Open a browser (Firefox, Chrome, Microsoft Edge, or Safari)
2. Type *webcourses.niu.edu* in the address bar and click **Go** or press **Enter**
3. Type your **NIU AccountID@mail.niu.edu** in the *Z-ID/AccountID* box
4. Type your **Password** in the *Password* box
5. Click the **Login** button to log in to Blackboard

Requesting a Course in Blackboard

You need to request your Blackboard course(s) each semester. You will only be able to request courses if you are the instructor of record in MyNIU.

1. After logging in to Blackboard, click **Tools** in the left menu
2. Click **Blackboard Faculty Tools**
3. Click **My Courses** to request a course
4. Select the **Semester** and click the **Submit** button
5. Select the course(s) you would like to request and click **Request Single Section(s)** (for master courses select **Combine Sections**)
6. Select whether you want the course to automatically be made available to students, and specify the date you want the course available
7. Click the **Submit** button

Note: The request will be processed immediately, and you will receive a confirmation email when it is complete. The course will be in the Original Course View until you convert the course to the Ultra Course View.

Making a Course Available

If you do not choose auto availability, you will need to make your course available manually. After the end of the semester, all courses are automatically made private.

1. After logging in to Blackboard, go to the Courses page and select the desired course
2. Under *Details and Actions*, click **Course is Private**
3. In the pop-up window click **Open to Students**

Converting a Course to Ultra Course View

When you convert to Ultra Course View, you are first shown a preview mode where you can explore how your course functions before committing to Ultra Course View.

1. Log in to Blackboard and open the course you would like to convert
2. Make sure the course is private. In the upper right you will see a padlock icon. If it is open, the course is available. Hover your cursor over the padlock and click **Make Unavailable**
3. The padlock icon will close and turn red, indicating that the course is private
4. Click the **Pencil** icon to the left of the padlock
5. Click **Try the Ultra Course View**
6. Explore your course. If you would like to keep the Ultra course view click **Use the Ultra Course** if you would like to return to Original course view click **Back to Original Course**

Remember!
You must request a new Blackboard course each semester

Learn more!

Tips, FAQs, and tutorials at
niu.edu/blackboard

Information about Ultra Course View
niu.edu/blackboard/ultra

Ask a Question form NIU faculty and staff at
go.niu.edu/ask-bb-question

Creating an Announcement

Announcements are an ideal tool for communicating time-sensitive material to students, such as reminders about upcoming due dates or changes to the syllabus.

1. Log in to Blackboard and access the course
2. Under *Details and Actions* click **Create Announcement**
3. Give your announcement a title, select recipients, and type your announcement
4. To schedule your announcement to post at a later time check the box next to *Schedule Announcement* and select the dates you would like the announcement to be visible and click **Save**
5. To display your announcement immediately click **Save**, then click **Post Now**

Sending Messages

Blackboard Messages helps you communicate with persons who are enrolled in the Blackboard course. Messages can be sent to select students, TAs, groups, or an entire class.

1. Login to Blackboard and open the course
2. Click the **Envelope** icon (upper right)
3. On the Messages page click the **Plus** icon (upper right)
4. Select **Recipients** and type the message
5. Click **Send**

Note: If you would like an email copy of your message to be sent you must check the box next to *Send an Email Copy.*

Adding Content to a Course

You can add content to any Course, Module, or Folder by hovering your cursor over the area you would like to add content to an clicking the **Plus Icon.**

1. Login to Blackboard and access the course
2. To place content inside a Learning Module or Folder you must open it first
3. 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 LTI or Upload a SCORM package click **Create**
   - To upload content from your computer click **Upload**
   - To upload from an external location select the appropriate source

Adding a Teaching Assistant

All students who enroll for a course in MyNIU will automatically be added to the Blackboard course. Teaching Assistants must be added manually.

1. Login to Blackboard and access the course
2. Under *Details and Actions* click **Roster**
3. Click the **Plus** icon (upper right)
4. Search for the person you are adding and click the **Plus** icon
5. Choose the proper role
6. Click **Save**

Copying Content from a Previous Course

To copy materials from an Original Course to an Ultra Course, use the Course Copy tool in the Original Course. The materials will be copied and converted in a single step.

Copying from an Ultra Course into an Ultra Course
1. Open the Ultra course you want to copy content to
2. Navigate to where you want the content to be placed and click the **Plus** icon
3. Click **Copy Content**
4. Your other Ultra courses will be listed in the side panel. To copy an entire course, click the check box. To copy selected content, click the course name to and check the boxes next to the content you would like to copy
5. Click **Copy Selected Content**

Note: Status indicators on the *Course Content* page show the progress of the copy process.

Previewing Your Course as a Student

Student Preview allows you to experience a course as your students will to ensure proper function. Your preview student is retained until you manually remove it on the Roster.

1. Login to Blackboard and access the course
2. Under *Details and Actions,* click **Student Preview**
3. Click **Start Preview**
4. To exit the Student Preview click the **Three Dots** (upper right)
   - To keep content created while in student preview click **Exit Preview**
   - To delete content created while in Student Preview click **Reset Preview**