Preparing your Blackboard Courses

This checklist is designed to help faculty prepare their new courses when they have previously taught the same course in a previous semester. It provides the steps you should take to ensure that your course is ready to go before the first day of class. Detailed instructions for performing a Course Copy are available in a separate tutorial sheet. If you need any assistance with your Blackboard course shells, please contact the Help Desk at helpdesk@concord.edu

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#1. Course Copy

The Course Copy feature of Blackboard allows you to copy contents from a previous course shell into a new one. First, navigate to the course that contains the content. The Course Copy tool can be found in the course Control Panel section under, "Packages and Utilities."

Detailed instructions can be found in the "CU Tutorial - Course Copy," available on the CTL Blackboard Training page at: https://myconcordu.concord.edu/pages/blackboard-training

#2. Course Menu

Once the Course Copy is complete, your contents will be merged with the course template. This typically means that the content you copied over will be placed at the very bottom of the Course Menu on the left. You will need to rearrange this menu to reflect your previous course and desired course design. Rearrange Course Menu items by placing your mouse over the item, clicking and holding the arrow icon to the left, and dragging the item up to the desired location.

#3. Unnecessary Items

A well-designed course is simple for students to navigate with a clean Course Menu. Be sure to go through the Course Menu and delete items that are not needed or duplicated. Please leave the "Blackboard Tutorial" and items under the "Student Resources" section.

Because we changed the course template, you may carry over old template items that can be deleted. This includes:

- **Required Technology** (only from the Course Menu. This item has been renamed and moved to the Welcome Page)
- **Policies** (Only from the Course Menu)
- **Student Resources** (Only the clickable link, not the header. This was renamed to Student Support & Resources. Keep the new link)

#4. Landing Page

Based on faculty feedback and student navigation problems, we have changed the course landing page to the "Welcome and Start Here" page instead of the "Home Page." The Home Page often confused students and information was not always accurate. However, if you would like to change the landing page back to the Home Page, or another page, such as Announcements, scroll down to the Control Panel, click on "Customization" and then "Teaching Style" to find the "Entry Point" setting.

If you choose to use the "Welcome and Start Here" page (recommended), make sure that you provide helpful information to get your students started, such as a welcome message and navigation information, including what students should do first.

#5. Due Dates

Go through your course and update all of the due dates found on assignments, discussion forums, quizzes, and other activities to reflect the upcoming semester. If dates are not changed, students will receive multiple notifications about missed assignments as soon as they are enrolled.

#6. Check Links

If you provide links in your course to various website resources, including videos or articles, click on every link to ensure that they are still working to prevent your students from clicking on a dead link.

#7. Make Course Available (Optional)

Courses are set to "unavailable" by default. Students will be enrolled into their Blackboard courses on the Friday before the course begins. However, they will not see the course until the course is set to "available." Technology Services will make all courses available on the morning classes begin, but you can allow students early access by setting your course to available. You can make your course available by clicking on "Customization" under the Control Panel and then clicking on "Properties." You will then see an option to "Make Course Available". Click Submit to save these changes.