

UT Martin Blackboard FAQ

This document will answer some of the questions you may have about Blackboard (Bb), how UTM uses Bb, resources available, and procedures/time lines/administrative details/etc.

What is Blackboard (Bb)?

Blackboard is a web-based Course Management System that allows creation of an online environment for your students. It may be used to deliver a completely online course or to supplement face-to-face instruction. Bb itself and associated technologies like Wimba and Apreso make available a wide variety of tools. Instructors can provide course materials, discussion boards, online testing, classroom recordings, voice-annotated material, syllabus, grade books, etc. to their students. All of this is available to students 24/7 from anywhere in the world via the internet.

UTM Bb servers are hosted by Blackboard, Inc. and are located at a hardened, secure data center in Virginia. This provides nearly 100% up time, multi-path access, and disaster recovery.

How do I access Bb?

To log onto Bb you need an account. This will be the same as your email ID and password. If you don't already have an account, please contact the UTM helpdesk. You may access Bb by logging into the UTM portal at <http://www.utm.edu> (sign on at the bottom of the page) or by going directly to <http://utm.blackboard.com>

Where can I get help using Bb?

1. Online Bb orientation course (contact the ITC if you are not currently enrolled).
2. Classroom and one-on-one training from the ITC: <http://www.utm.edu/itc>
3. Online Training Material from the ITC:
<http://www.utm.edu/departments/itc/training.php>
4. Quick Tutorials from Bb, Inc.
(<http://www.blackboard.com/quicktutorials/quicktutorials.htm>)
5. Online Tutor: <http://www.utm.edu/otutor.php>

How do I get a course on Bb?

To use Bb you first must have an account on Bb, and then you must request a course be created. You may submit an online Bb course request form to the ITC at: <http://www.utm.edu/departments/itc/requests.php>

You have several choices with a course on Bb:

- **Course Request:** have a completely new course created for you
- **Course Copy:** have an old course copied into a new course
- **Continuous Course:** reuse individual courses each semester. Continuous courses are denoted by C1, C2, C3, etc. in the Course_ID and may be reused each semester. The course ID is static, while the instructor may alter the Course name each semester to reflect the current term.

Course ID

In Bb, a course is described uniquely by its Course_ID. Please note this is different from the course name. For example, an English 112 course may be named “English 112 Fall 2009 MWF 11:00 – 12:00” while its Course_ID might be **ENGL112_003_FA2009** or **ENGL112_rsmith_C1**. Once a course is created, the Course_ID is fixed and cannot be changed. However, the course name can be changed at will by the instructor via the control panel.

The distinction between course name and Course_ID will be very important when requesting batch course enrolls. The course name is of your choosing, but most often a Course_ID is one of the two layouts:

1. **xxxxZZZ_sss_TTyyyy**

xxxx: course subject (ie. ENGL, MATH, ACCT, PSYC, etc as described in Banner)

ZZZ: course number as described in Banner (ie. 112, 241, 455, etc)

sss: section number (ie. 001, 003, etc) note it is zero filled

TT: term as described in Banner (FA, SP, MM, SU, S1, S2)

yyyy: year (ie. 2009, 2010, etc)

or

2. **xxxxZZZ_nnnnnnnnnnnnnn_Cw**

xxxx: course subject (ie. ENGL, MATH, ACCT, PSYC, etc as described in Banner)

ZZZ: course number as described in Banner (ie. 112, 241, 455, etc)

nnn: instructor name (ie. jdoe or janesmith, etc)

w: digit that is incremented in case more than one course of same course_id is needed, normally starts with 1. (ie. C1, C2, etc)

Note: these Course_ID layouts are a convention set up by UTM and are not a hard and fast requirement, but they do make keeping track of courses on the system much easier.

How do I enroll students in my Bb course?

Once your course has been created, you need students enrolled in that course before they can see your content or use the Bb tools. Each UTM student taking greater than zero hours in a semester will have a Bb account for that semester.

Students are NOT automatically placed in Bb courses.

Students may be enrolled in a course by one of two ways:

1. The instructor adds them to the course individually via the Control Panel “Enroll User” option.
2. Instructor requests a batch enroll of students into a Bb course.

Course Enroll Requests

To request a batch enroll, go to <http://www.utm.edu/departments/itc/requests.php> and click on the “Course Enroll” link. Fill in the required contact info at the top and then fill out the Course_ID and corresponding CRN’s for that course. The Course_ID identifies your course in Bb and the CRN identifies your course in Banner. We use these two pieces of information to extract student user IDs from Banner and place them into your Bb course. You may enroll multiple CRN’s into a single Bb course if you desire. This is often done if you are teaching multiple sections of the same course and want only one Bb course for the entire group of say 3 sections. When you submit this request we’ll take the supplied info and run a batch enroll for you. This is a one-time occurrence for the semester. After the batch process is run, you are responsible for the drop/adds into your Bb class. Drop/Add after the initial batch enroll must be completed by the instructor via the control panel in your course.

PLEASE NOTE! The Course_ID is VERY specific and spelling must be exactly as in Bb. This Course_ID is assigned when the course is created. If the course has not been created, do not submit a batch enroll request until the course has been created and you are sure of the Course_ID.

How do I find my Course_ID for the batch enroll request?

1. Log on to the Bb system
2. Click on the orange “Courses” tab at the top (see Fig. 1)
3. In the “Course List” box, you will see each course listed with the Course_ID and course name in bold (Fig. 2)
4. You can copy/paste that entire line into the course batch enroll request form.

5. A common mistake is to use the course name as shown in the “My Courses” box on the first page. THIS IS NOT THE CORRECT INFORMATION.
6. Figure 1 lists the first course as:

EDAS765 NC1 FA2008: Essential Skills for School Leaders, NC1, FA2008

The Course_ID is shown in yellow, followed by a colon, and then the course name is shown in green.

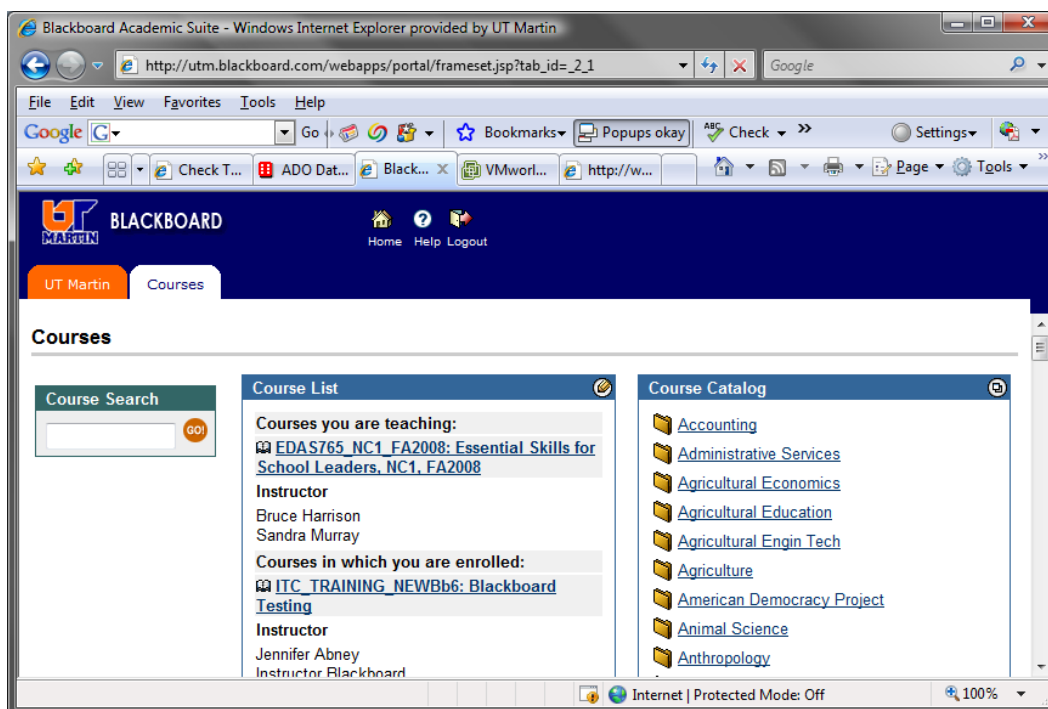
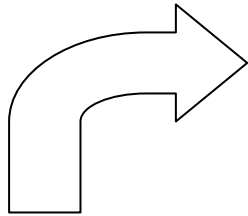


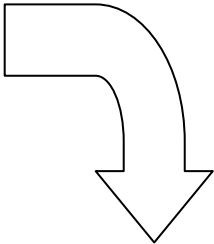
Figure 1

How Bb is prepared for each semester

Bb operation at UTM runs in a defined cycle from semester to semester. At the end of each semester, instructors are encouraged to archive the gradebook of their course and save it for future reference. Before the start of the next semester Bb runs a batch archive of all courses on the system. After this is complete, we remove students from Bb and reload with new students for the next semester. A student must have greater than zero hours in a semester to have a Bb account created for them. Approximately 2-4 days before the next semester starts we process all batch enroll requests. We wait until the last minute to do these so as to minimize the amount of drop/adds the faculty member must process manually.

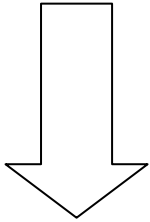
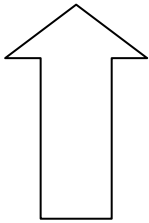


- Instructors archive grade center.
- Batch archives at Bb done.
- Just before semester starts, remove last semester students & reload with upcoming semester students.



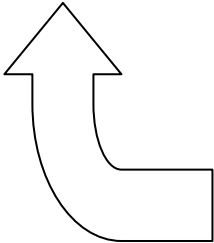
Fall Semester

Spring Semester



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Maymester/Summer Semester

