Blackboard Basics

Log-In to Blackboard

1. In the address bar, type **www.noc.edu**.
2. On the right hand-side of the NOC website, look for the words **"College Resources"** and click on "**Blackboard**" underneath the **"College Resources"** heading.
3. This should bring you to the Blackboard website.
4. Your user name is the first part of your email address—**your first name.last name.** Example**:** delisa.ging
5. Your password is the same as the one used for MyNOC access.
6. Your Blackboard homepage should now appear. This page is a snapshot view of all assignments and due dates for all of your courses.
7. Scroll down the Blackboard homepage until you see the list of courses that you currently teach and select a course you would like to work on during today's training session.

Notes on Different Blackboard Views

1. To work with Blackboard, you have to make sure the **edit mode** is **on.** The **edit mode button** can be found in the upper right corner of the screen.

2. You can switch from teacher view to student view of your course by clicking on the **eye icon** in the upper right corner of the page. You can return to the teacher view by clicking again on the **eye icon**, followed by the **Exit Preview** button, and the **Continue** button**.**

Working in Your Blackboard Course

To name your course—

1. Once you have selected a course in which to work, click on the down arrow next to the words "**Homepage"** near the middle of the page.
2. Select "**Page Banner**,**"** type the name of your course, and click "**Submit."**

To create an announcement—

1. Click on "**more announcements…"** in the **My Announcement section**.
2. Next, click on "**Create Announcement**."
3. Name the announcement, type the announcement in the text block, select the duration you want the announcement to be visible, and click "**Submit**."

A Note on the Other Announcement Options, such as the "To Do" and "Needs Attention" Boxes—

All these options are ways for students to be reminded of what they need to do in the course. I usually delete these other announcement options because students find them confusing. I like to keep all time sensitive issues housed under My Announcements. Students seem to appreciate this centralized notification system.

To Remove an Item from Your Course's Homepage—

1. Move the cursor over the far right corner of the box that contains the item you want to remove from view. You should see **a small gray circle with an "X" in it**. Click on that **circle**, and a message will appear asking if you want to remove the item from view. If you want to remove the item from view, click **OK**.

Working with the Required Blue Links on the Control Panel of Your Blackboard Course

The following links were approved by the Online Committee to meet the Standards of Quality Matters, a faculty-centered, peer review process that is designed to certify the quality of online and blended courses.

Under the **"Course Information"** heading, you will find**—**

Homepage—This page allows you to post announcements and due dates for students in one central location.

Course Navigation and Welcome—Welcome students to your course with a friendly greeting that shows why your course is important and its practical application to real-world experience. In addition, consider including explanations of these required blue links on your course's control panel, so students will know what can be found under each link. At the least, tell students the steps needed to begin the course.

Syllabus—NOC has a set syllabus format that contains course, instructor, and textbook information along with course and institutional policies. A template of NOC's syllabus format can be obtained from Academic Affairs.

Instructor Information—Upload instructor information relevant to the course, your contact information, and, perhaps, a picture. A picture is a nice touch to help students place a name with a face, especially in an online course.

Your Course Grade—You do not need to add information to this link. Once you enter your Blackboard grades, each student will be able to see his or her individual assignment grades and overall grade in the course.

Under the **"Communications"** heading, you will find—

Class Announcements—You can create a class announcement by clicking on this link. This announcement will be posted on your course's homepage. In addition to posting the announcement on your course's homepage, that announcement can be sent to students' email accounts.

Email—External—This function allows you to begin an email with students while in Blackboard and continue the conversation from your NOC email account. This is usually a more convenient way of communicating with students because you do not have to log in Blackboard to see students' replies.

Email—(In Course Only)—This function requires that you be logged in to Blackboard to correspond with students.

Under the **"Course Content"** heading, you will find—

Course Material and Assignments—Include your course curriculum, such as handouts, readings, assignments, quizzes, and tests.

Start here!—This link should include the steps needed to begin the course, such as where students can find the beginning course information and the order in which the assignments are to be completed.

Discussion Board—This function allows for classroom discussions to be started or continued outside the confines of the brick and mortar classroom.

Under the **"Student Resources"** heading, you will find—

Information contained under this heading is always provided for instructors, so instructors will not have to add information to this section.

Resources for Academic and Student Support—This link tells of the tutoring, testing, and disability services offered by NOC.

Student Blackboard Help—This tab is a direct link to Blackboard Help for Students. Students can type any topic in the search box to find additional Blackboard help and resources. For example, if students are having trouble creating a Discussion Board post, they could type, "Creating a Discussion Board post," to find additional help.

Tutor.com Online Tutoring 24/7—Students can find free 24/7 tutoring help for any class by clicking on this link.

NOC Academic Calendar—This link shows the current NOC academic calendar that includes drop dates for classes and school holidays.

NOC Bookstore—This link will take students to the NOC Bookstore's website for all their books, school supplies, and NOC apparel and memorabilia.

Surveys—This link pertains **only** to online classes. NOC administration will ask students to complete surveys, such as course evaluations, via this link.

Creating Course Content

To upload a file—

1. Click on the link in which you want to add content, such as the **Syllabus link.**
2. Click on "**Build Content**."
3. Select "**File**."
4. Name the file, such as **"Syllabus."**
5. Browse for the appropriate file and attach it.
6. Select the settings appropriate for your needs, such as "Track Number of Views" and dates the material will be displayed.
7. Click "**Submit**."

To create an item—

1. Click on the link in which you want to add content, such as the **Instructor Information link**.
2. Click on "**Build Content**."
3. Select "**Item**."
4. In the large blank, type your text. Using the toolbar above the textbox, you can add a webcam video, insert a media file, or insert a Mashup, which allows you to embed Youtube and other video sources into your message.
5. Select the settings appropriate for your needs, such as "Track Number of Views" and dates the material will be displayed.
6. Click "**Submit**."

Creating Different Forms of Assessments

To create an assignment—

1. Click the **"+"** sign on the left-hand side of the page.
2. Click on "**Content Area**."
3. Name the document **"Assignment 1,"** check **"Available to All Users,"** and click "**Submit**."
4. Next, you should see the words **"Assignment 1"** in blue in the white left-hand column. Click on those words.
5. Click on "**Assessments**" and then scroll down and click on the word **"Assignment**."
6. Give the assignment a name, give the instructions for the assignment, give the points possible for the assignment, give the due date for the assignment, and click "**Submit**."

To create a peer review of an assignment—

1. Click the **"+"** sign on the left-hand side of the page.

2. Click on "**Content Area**."
3. Name the document **"Peer Review 1**,**"** check **"Available to All Users,"** and click "**Submit**."
4. Next, you should see the words **"Peer Review 1**" in blue in the white left-hand column. Click on those words.
5. Click on **"Assessments"** and then scroll down and click on the words **"Self and Peer Assessments**."
6. Give the Peer Review a name, give the instructions for the review, give the due date for the review, select the appropriate self and peer evaluation options, and then click "**Submit**."
7. Now, you should see a screen that reads, **"Assessment Canvas**." Below this wording, click on **"Create a Question**."
8. Next, in the blank write a peer review question, such as **"What is the thesis statement of this essay?"**
9. Click "**Submit"** at the bottom of the page.
10. To attach criteria for a peer review question, click **on the arrow next to "Question 1**."
11. Scroll down and click on **"Criteria**."
12. Click on **"Create Criteria"** or **"Word Count Criteria"** that can be found above the question you just created. You can create specific criteria for a question or a word count criteria along with assigning point values to some or all criteria if you choose. Once you have created the criteria needed for the question, click "**OK"** in the bottom right corner of the page.
13. To create another peer review question, click on **"Create a Question"** above Question 1.
14. Complete **steps 8 through 12** until you have created all the questions and criteria for each peer review question.
15. Once you have created all the questions for the Peer Review, click "OK" at the bottom of the screen.

To create a test—

1. Click the **"+"** on the left-hand side of the page.
2. Click on "**Content Area**."
3. Name the document **"Test 1**,**"** check **"Available to All Users**," and click **Submit**.
4. Next, you should see the words **"Test 1"** in blue in the white left-hand column. Click on these words.
5. Click on **"Assessments"** and then **"Test**."
6. Click on **"Create"** across from the words **"Create a New Test**."
7. Give the test a name, add a description of the test, the instructions for the test, and click **Submit**.
8. Click **"Create a Question"** and select **"Multiple Choice"** from the long list of testing options.
9. Name the test question, such as **"Question 1**."
10. Next, write the test question and then provide four possible answers.
11. By each possible question, you will see a small circle. Click on the appropriate circle to select the correct answer to your question. After these steps, click "**Submit**."

To add the same or a different type of question to the same test—

1. Click **"Create a Question"** and select **"Essay"** from the long list of testing options.
2. Name the test question **"Question 2**."
3. Next, write the test question. You can provide the correct answer if you want students to see the answer, can create a rubric based on format, organization, grammar, or other areas you deem important to grade, and can add instructor notes regarding an answer.
4. When you are finished with the test question, click "**Submit**."
5. After you have created your test, you can assign different point values to the questions. Across from each question on the far right-hand side, you should see a box with the number **"10"** in it. To change the point total for a question, click in that box and assign a new point total for that question.
6. At the bottom of the page, click **"OK**," and this action will bring you to a page that reads, **"Add Test."**
7. Click on the test you want students to take and click "**Submit."**
8. Under the **Test Options heading**, answer the questions about how and when you want the test displayed for students to view. **In the Test Availability area, you need to click the circle next to "Make the Link Available" when you are ready for students to view a test.**

To create a test from other tests already saved in the Blackboard Testing Center—

1. Click the **"+"** on the left-hand side of the page.
2. Click on "**Content Area**."
3. Name the document **"Test 2,"** check **"Available to All Users,"** and click **"Submit."**
4. Next, you should see the words **"Test 2"** in blue in the white left-hand column. Click on these words.
5. Click on "**Assessments**" and then **"Test**."
6. Click on **"Create"** across from the words **"Create a New Test."**
7. Give the test a name, add a description of the test, the instructions for the test, and click **Submit**.
8. Next, you will see the Test Canvas page. Under the **Reuse Question heading**, select **"Create Question Set."**
9. Click on the blue word **"Tests"** in the left-hand column.
10. Place a checkmark next to the tests from which you want to select questions to create the new test.
11. Checkmark the questions you want to appear on the new test you are creating and click "**Submit**."
12. Now, you should be returned to the Test Canvas page. You will need to place **a checkmark next to the "1. Question Set,"** so the questions you selected to form the set will be added to the test. Also, select the number of questions you want displayed from the set and click **Submit**.
13. At the bottom of the page, click **"OK**," and this action will bring you to a page that reads, **"Add Test."**
14. Click on the test you want students to take and click **Submit**.

15. Under the **Test Options heading,** answer the questions about how and when you want the test displayed for students to view. **In the Test Availability area, you need to click the circle next to "Make the Link Available" when you are ready for students to view a test.**

Working with the Grade Center

Assessments created using Blackboard will automatically appear along with the students' grades for those assessments.

To add a grade to the gradebook that is not a Blackboard assessment—

1. In the white left-hand column, click on the words **"Grade Center."**
2. Next, scroll down and click on **"Full Grade Center."**
3. Click on **"Create a Column"** found in **the blue headings at the top of the page.**
4. Give the grade column or assessment a name, give the point total for the assessment, and select other grading options that you deem appropriate for the assessment.

To enter students' grades in a grade column—

1. Select the appropriate student.
2. Enter the grade in the appropriate column.
3. Click **"Enter"** after entering each student's grade.

To delete a grade column that you have created—

1. Click on the arrow next to the grade column you want to delete.
2. Scroll down and select "**Delete Column**."
3. Next, click **"OK"** if you want to delete the grade column.

To convert a course's total points into letter grades—

Blackboard already has a "Total Points" column in the gradebook. Here how to edit the "Total Points" Column.

1. While in **Grade Center**, scroll across the top of your grade book headings until you find the "**Total Points**" column.
2. Now, **click on the gray circle with a "v" in it.**
3. Scroll down and select the grade option you deem appropriate for the Primary Display.
4. Scroll down and select the grade option you deem appropriate for the Secondary Display.
5. Select the other column and grade options that you deem appropriate.
6. Next, click **"Submit**."

To weight grades in the Blackboard grade book—

In order to weight grades in the Full Grade Center, it is recommended that you first assign Categories to assessment items, such as assignments, quizzes, and exams.

1. While in **Grade Center**, scroll across the top of your grade book headings until you find the "**Weighted Total**" column.
2. Now, click on **the gray circle with a "v" in it.**
3. Next, scroll down and click on **"Edit Column Information."**
4. Scroll down and select the grade option you deem appropriate for the Primary Display.
5. Scroll down and select the grade option you deem appropriate for the Secondary Display.
6. Select the other column and grade options that you deem appropriate.
7. Under the **Select Columns** heading, you should see two boxes, and **you will be working with the box with the wording "Categories to Select."** The categories range from "Assignment" to "Blog."
8. Click a category to include in the weighted grade column. To add a category to the **Selected Columns area**, **highlight the category on the left and click the center arrow.**
9. After all the categories have been selected and added to the Selected Columns area, you can set the weight percentages by entering the appropriate number in the percentage box for each category. **Make sure the total weight is 100%.**

To Add a Category to a Weighted Column—

You will use this step if you need to add an assessment that is not listed in the "Categories to Select" box when setting up your weighted columns. For example, an assessment category you might use in your class would be "Speeches." Blackboard does not have an assessment category for "Speeches," so you would need to create this category using the following directions.

1. While in **Grade Center**, click on **"Manage"** found in **the blue headings at the top of the page.**
2. Scroll down and click on the word **"Categories."**
3. To add an assessment category, click on **"Create Category" in the blue heading at the top of the page.**
4. Next, name the grading category and click **"Submit."**
5. At **the bottom of the "Categories" page**, **click "OK."**
6. Now, scroll across the top of your grade book headings until you find the "**Weighted Total**" column.
7. **Click on the gray circle with a "v" in it.**
8. Scroll down and click on **"Edit Column Information."**
9. Scroll down to the **Select Columns** heading, you should see two boxes, and **you will be working with the box with the wording "Categories to Select."** The categories range from "Assignment" to "Blog."
10. Click the new category you want to include in the weighted grade column. To add the new category to the **Selected Columns area**, **highlight the category on the left and click the center arrow.**
11. After the new category is added to the Selected Columns area, you can set the weight percentages by entering the appropriate number in the percentage box for each category. **Make sure the total weight is 100%.**

Blackboard will only allow you to delete a category that you created. Blackboard will not allow you to delete their predetermined categories. Here is how to delete a category you created from a weighted column.

To Delete a Category You Created from a Weighted Column—

1. While in **Grade Center**, click on **"Manage"** found in **the blue headings at the top of the page.**
2. Scroll down and click on the word **"Categories."**
3. To delete an assessment category you created, click on the small gray box next to the grading category you want deleted**.**
4. **Now, click "Delete" and then "OK" if you want the category deleted.**
5. At **the bottom of the "Categories" page**, **click "OK."**
6. Now, scroll across the top of your grade book headings until you find the "**Weighted Total"** column.
7. **Click on the gray circle with a "v" in it.**
8. Scroll down and click on **"Edit Column Information."**
9. Scroll down to the **Select Columns** heading, you should see two boxes, and **you will be working with the box with the wording "Categories to Select."** The categories range from "Assignment" to "Blog." Since you deleted a category in the Selected Columns area, you might need to redistribute the weight percentages by entering the appropriate number in the percentage box for each category. **Make sure the total weight is 100%.**

Blackboard has no attendance record-keeping program, but you can create an attendance tracker using a grading column in your grade book. You can have this column be included in your course's point total or not included in that point total.

To Create an Attendance Tracker—

1. While in **Grade Center**, click on **"Create a Column"** found in **the blue headings at the top of the page.**
2. Name the column **"Attendance Tracker"** and select the grading options you deem appropriate. If you want students' attendance to count as a grade, you will place the number of points to be awarded in the **"Points Possible" blank**. If you do not want points to be awarded, place **"0"** in the **"Points Possible" blank**. In addition, if you do not want points to be awarded, look under the **Options heading**, and click on the **"No" circle** next to **"Include This Option in Grade Center Calculations."**

To Record Attendance Using the Attendance Tracker—

1. While in the **Grade Center**, scroll over to the **"Attendance Tracker" column**.
2. Select the appropriate student, type **"1"** in this grading column, and click **"Enter."**
3. Next, click on the **"v" across from the number you just typed.**
4. Scroll down and click on **"Quick Comment."**
5. In the "**Feedback to User" blank**, type in the date the student was absent, such as 11/14/2014,
6. Click **'Submit**."

Each time a student is absent you will need to update the number of missed class sessions and add the date(s) the student missed in the "Feedback to User" blank.

The Attendance Tracker allows students to see their number of absences and the class sessions missed when they check their Blackboard grades. Students will not have to ask you for this information when you make this information available using the Attendance Tracker.

Copying a Course to an Empty Course Shell

1. On **your homepage** under the **My Courses heading** on the right-hand side of the page, click on the course you want to copy.
2. In the white column on the right-hand side of the page, select "Packages and Utilities."
3. Under the **Packages and Utilities head**ing, click on **"Copy Course**."
4. Next, a page with a **Copy Course heading** will appear. Across from **"Select Copy Type**," scroll down and select **"Copy Course Materials into an Existing Course**."
5. Across from the **"Destination Course ID," browse for the course you want to copy the existing information to, your destination course.**
6. This will bring you to a new window. **Click on the circle next to your destination course** and click **"Submit"** on the bottom right-hand side of the page.
7. Next, click on the copy options you want to transfer, such as information, content, and journals.
8. If you would like to copy a student list, you can do so by clicking on "**Include Enrollments in the Copy"** across from **"Enrollments**." However, it will not copy student records, such as grades. User records are only copied by selecting **"Copy Course with Users (Exact Copy**)" across from **"Select Copy Type**."
9. When you have finished selecting the copy options, click **"Submit"** in the bottom right-hand corner of the page.

How to Make a Course Available to Students

1. Click on **"Customization"** in the white left-hand column.
2. Next, select **"Properties**."
3. In the **"Set Availability" section**, click **"Yes"** to make the course available to users.
4. In the **Set Course Duration** section, choose one of the following options:
   - Continuous (default) to leave the course without a specified start and end date.
   - Select Dates to choose a start and/or end date
   - Days from the Date of Enrollment to specify length of time users have to access the course after enrolling.
5. Click **"Submit**."

How to Make a Course Unavailable to Students

1. Click on **"Customization"** in the white left-hand column.
2. Next, select **"Properties**."
3. In the **"Set Availability" section**, click **"No"** to make the course available to users.
4. Click **"Submit**."

To Customize the Look of Your Course

1. Click on **"Customization"** in the white left-hand column.
2. Scroll down and select **"Quick Setup Guide."**
3. Select **"Choose a Course Theme."**
4. Select a course theme and click **"Apply Changes."**