

Academic Technologies: Blackboard 9.1

New Features in Blackboard 9.1

The look and feel of Blackboard 9.1 is almost identical to version 9.0. There are a few changes in design and several new features, all of which were designed to enhance the Instructor and Student experiences. The new features and changes are described below.

New Features of Blackboard 9.1:

- Course Files
 - The Course Files Repository is a single area of a course that contains all the files attached to the course. The Course Files Repository is searchable and provides a single update site, which means that as long as you maintain the same file name any changes you make to a file are reflected in all occurrences of the file throughout the course.
- Mashups
 - Files from YouTube, Flickr, and SlideShare applications integrate with Blackboard courses seamlessly—embed videos, images, and slides to your course content.
- Grade Center
 - Instructors now have the ability to color-code grade cells to designate criteria such as grades that are below a specified benchmark or late submissions. The Grade Center allows instructor to:
 - Track grade trends for evaluation and adjustment of lesson plans
 - Identify students who might be falling behind
 - Highlight items that require a grade adjustment
 - Pre-made and Customizable Smart Views allow instructors to choose which parts of the Grade Center they wish to view and to save the most used views for easy access. For example:
 - If instructors have assigned Groups, they may save separate Grade Center Smart Views for each Group that show only those students within a Group
 - Instructors may also create Grade Center Smart Views for each individual student (for advising meetings, etc.)
 - Grade cell sub-menus contain “View Attempt” options that take instructors directly to student submissions/attempts without having to open them through the “View Grade Details”.
- Integrated Interactive Rubrics for grading of papers and assignments.
- An option for Anonymous and Question-by-Question grading of assessments.
- Contextual Grading of submissions streamlines the grading process.
- Textbook feature aids students with obtaining the correct materials for class. After an instructor searches for or manually adds the course textbook(s), the system will retrieve and display all available relevant information, including book cover images and publisher prices, within the course for students’ reference in purchasing the correct texts.

- McGraw-Hill Textbook Integration Tool
 - Bb courses using McGraw-Hill textbooks can integrate content from the McGraw-Hill publisher's website to access supplemental content, including assignments, assessments, and learning modules.
 - The McGraw-Hill content appears within the Blackboard Course environment.
 - Grades for McGraw-Hill content sync automatically with the Bb Grade Center.
- The WebAssign homework management system is integrated with Bb 9.1, so WebAssign users now have a single sign-on point with Bb, and rosters for both systems can be synchronized.

Differences between Blackboard 9.0 and 9.1:

- The Control Panel has additional items:
 - Files: allows a quick search of the files saved in the Course Files Repository and is the direct link to the tool.
 - Grade Center: the Grade Center has its own button in the Control Panel rather than being included under the Evaluate item. There are several sub-menu items (Default Smart Views):
 - Needs Grading: shows only items that require instructor attention for grades
 - Full Grade Center: shows the entire Grade Center grid
 - Assignments: shows only the grade columns for Bb Assignments
 - Tests: shows only the grade columns for Bb Assessments
- The Grade Center maintains the instructor's location in the grade sheet when the window is refreshed, rather than sending the user back to the top-right corner of the sheet.
- Assessment creation has been refined to allow:
 - Automatic question numbering while maintaining drag-and-drop re-ordering of questions
 - Expanded and easier management of test questions and question pools for reuse in future exams
- Contextual Menus are slightly different
 - The "Build Content" menu combines the "Create Item" and "Build" menus that were in 9.0. The new "Build Content" menu lists the same items that were in 9.0, but in addition provides more options to allow the creation of pages and items with the newly incorporated features such as the Mashups and McGraw-Hill library, as well as Learning Modules, audio, image, URL and video content.
 - Instead of the "Evaluate" menu button, there is now a "Create Assessment" menu, and it contains the same items as before, with the addition of the "McGraw-Hill Assignment."
 - The "Add Interactive Tool" menu combines the "Collaborate" and "More" menus that were in 9.0, so it provides the option to add blogs, wikis, podcasts, and groups, chat and virtual classroom links, as well as the newly-added discussion board link.
 - The final contextual menu is the "Assign Textbook" menu and it is for a new tool that aids students with obtaining the correct materials for class. After an instructor searches for or manually adds the course textbook(s), the system will retrieve and display all available relevant information, including book cover images and publisher prices, within the course for students' reference in purchasing the correct texts.
- Drag-&-Drop reordering of classes listed within the My Courses module using the module management settings.