CUNY Graduate Center
Information Technology

IT GC Blackboard ("Bb") Use Policies
Effective Date: January 29, 2021

Introduction

The City University of New York licenses and deploys Blackboard as its designated online course learning system. The following describes the CUNY Blackboard procedures that are in place at the Graduate Center.

Definition

The terms “Graduate Center” or “GC” includes only the Graduate School and online courses offered by the GC.

Note: For questions about student registration, course access, grading policies or record retention, please consult the CUNY and Graduate Center academic policies and procedures.

Section 1: Blackboard Accounts

Availability

Blackboard accounts are available to all CUNY faculty, students, and staff having a valid CUNYfirst account.

User name/password

A valid CUNY Login ID and password associated with faculty, student, or staff status is required to gain full access to Bb.

Email addresses

The CUNY email address identified with your CUNYfirst ID is automatically imported into Bb and associated with the corresponding Blackboard user account. Users may change the email address used by Bb internally to any CUNY email address.

Section 2: Blackboard Course Sites

Faculty/instructor access to course sites

Blackboard course sites are automatically created for every course section 3 months before the beginning of the semester. A faculty member identified as an “instructor” for a course section in CUNYfirst is automatically added to the corresponding Blackboard course site in the instructor role during course registration.

Departments or programs are responsible for identifying course instructors in CUNYfirst Campus Solutions. This is maintained by the Registrar and it reflects the instructor status in CUNYfirst as of the previous day. Instructors who do not appear in the schedule must contact the department or program offering the course to effect any revisions.
**Student access to course sites**
By default, all Bb courses are set as “unavailable” to students. Each Bb course site instructor is solely responsible for subsequently making the Bb course site available to students.

Once a Bb course site has been created, students who officially register for that course – and are so identified in CUNYfirst – will automatically be added to the Bb course site within 24 to 48 hours. Students are automatically removed from a given course in Blackboard if – for any reason – they are no longer identified on the CUNYfirst roster. Any discrepancy between the CUNYfirst course registration and the Bb roster remaining for more than 24 hours must be identified to the GC Blackboard Administrator by submitting detailed information to itservices@gc.cuny.edu.

**Managing course content**
Each instructor is individually and fully responsible for adding, revising and removing course content for any Blackboard course site to which the faculty member is assigned in a timely manner.

**Enrolling additional instructors, TAs and course builders**
Additional instructors, TAs, and course builders can be manually added by the instructor.

**Enrolling additional students**
No individual can be identified as a student participant in a Bb course site unless the individual is officially registered in CUNYfirst for the given course section.

**Instructor access to course sites after the semester has concluded**
Blackboard course sites (with associated content) remain accessible to instructors for one year after the end of the semester in which they were taught. (This policy is established by the CUNY CIS and cannot be changed by The Graduate Center.)

**Student access after the semester has concluded**
Each instructor is encouraged to make a given Bb course site unavailable to students at the end of the semester in which the course was conducted. This practice is designed to facilitate GC compliance with TEACH Act requirements that govern faculty use of copyrighted third party material online. When a given Bb course site is designated as unavailable, any student seeking access to course content must contact the instructor, EO or APO of the program offering the course.

**Limits on file size and course site size**
Any individual file to be uploaded to a Blackboard course site cannot exceed 25 Mb in size. (This policy is established and controlled by the CUNY CIS) To facilitate fast access to course materials, instructors are strongly encouraged to minimize file size when scanning documents or producing video or audio files. However, even when using efficient compression methods, video and audio files may be quite large, necessitating consideration of other file storage options. Instructors are encouraged to contact the GC Media Services for further information and assistance.

Effective Summer 2015, all Bb course sites will be limited to 750MB. An instructor can appeal for additional Bb site space by submitting a request to itservices@gc.cuny.edu. The request must
include detailed justification which will be submitted by the GC Blackboard Administrator to the CUNY Central Help Desk.

- Tier 1: 750 MB (by default)
- Tier 2: 1.5 GB (by request, upon approval)
- Tier 3: 3 GB (by request, upon approval)

Copyrighted material
Each instructor and student is individually and fully responsible for ensuring that materials placed on a Blackboard course site comply with all applicable copyright provisions and related governance. Guidelines for working with copyrighted material are available on the CUNY web site. Note particularly that online access to third party work is meant to approximate classroom access.

Instructors are encouraged to provide students with specific guidelines regarding appropriate/inappropriate uses of course materials.

Accessibility
Blackboard course sites and associated content (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, videos, and audio files) should be accessible to individuals with disabilities who may be using assistive technology devices such as screen readers. Faculty should consult guidelines for universal design, which include elements such as alternative text for images, transcripts for audio, and subtitles for video.

Retention of student work
Each instructor is individually and fully responsible for retaining student work submitted to a Blackboard course site in accordance with the CUNY Records Retention Schedule (posted at https://policy.cuny.edu/schedule/). Instructors have full access to student work on a given Blackboard course site for one year after the end of the semester in which the course was conducted. Thereafter, course sites are archived by CUNY CIS. Archived Bb course sites may be retrieved, if necessary, on request. Such requests must be accompanied by compelling justification and submitted to the GC Blackboard Administrator at itservices@gc.cuny.edu, who will forward the request to the CUNY Central Help Desk.

Section 3: Blackboard Organizations

Requesting an organization
Graduate Center students, faculty and staff may request a Blackboard site to support a GC-related function or activity beyond specific courses. Such a site is denoted a “Bb Organization”. Interested parties should submit a detailed request to itservices@gc.cuny.edu identifying the GC organization and the individual responsible for managing the Bb Organization (“Leader”). Once established, the GC Blackboard Administrator will train the Leader on procedures for managing the site.