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Blackboard LMS Policies & Guidelines

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SCOPE

PURPOSE

This document is intended to serve as a set of policies, procedures and guidelines for decision-making related to the use of the Blackboard™ Learning Management System (hereafter referred to as Bb) at Northeastern Illinois University (hereafter referred to as NEIU). This document is intended to reside online for ease in usability and access, as well as to ensure the availability of the most current version—indicated by the “Last Updated” date listed at the top of the document. Do not rely on printed copies of this document without first verifying their accuracy against subsequent online updates.

POLICY STATEMENT

Blackboard is the official university learning management system (LMS) and is an integral part of the campus NEIUworks environment. Blackboard course shells for course sections offered each semester are automatically built in Blackboard and these course shells are automatically populated with instructors assigned to teach the course and with the students enrolled. To make use of these pr-built Blackboard course shells, instructors must add content to each course shell and make the course available to students in the Blackboard system. Faculty, staff and students are expected to abide by the guidelines contained in this document regarding access and use of the Blackboard system. Issues of ownership of content in the Blackboard system are addressed in the NEIU Intellectual Property policy.

REGULATIONS

1. ACCESS TO BLACKBOARD

1.1 BB USER ACCOUNTS AND PASSWORDS

All NEIU faculty members and students receive Bb user accounts and are assigned a username (known as a NetID) by the university’s identity management system (e.g. aasmith). NEIU has implemented a single-user sign-on strategy in which a single username and password is used for Bb, NEIUport (the campus portal) and other electronic/online campus services. All users are given an NEIU e-mail account (e.g. aasmith@neiu.edu), which is used as their official e-mail address for campus services, including Bb.



1.2 BB INSTRUCTOR “STUDENT” ACCOUNTS

Bb instructors who wish to have a second account in order to enroll in their courses as students may send a request to eltt@neiu.edu, with “Request for Bb student account” as the subject. The username for the instructor “student” accounts will be the NetID preceded by the word “student,” without a space (e.g. studentasmith). Each semester, instructors must request that their student accounts be enrolled into their courses by sending a written request via an e-mail message to eltt@neiu.edu with the name, number and section for each course desired. Since the student accounts are created outside of the student information system, instructors must log in at <http://neiu.blackboard.com> to use the account.

1.3 ACCOUNT DURATION (I.E. REMOVAL OF ACCOUNTS)

A person’s Bb account will be disabled when the individual is no longer part of the NEIU community.

1.4 STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS OR OTHER NEIU AFFILIATED GROUPS

The Bb system is designed primarily for instructional use (i.e., to support courses offered by NEIU faculty). Organizations, special interest groups, task forces, committees and other individuals not enrolled in an academic course should use the Group Studio feature in NEIUport to manage communication, interaction and resource sharing within the group.

1.5 STUDENT ACCESS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each student shall maintain course security by not sharing his or her username and password with other individuals. Students shall execute additional responsibilities within the framework of each course as required by the instructor.

1.6 FACULTY ACCESS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Instructors shall:

- Administer their own course(s), including design, creation and uploading and backup of course content.
- Acquire copyright permission as needed for any information in any media format used within a Blackboard site.
- Perform routine “beginning of semester” tasks which may include, but are not limited to: **setting course availability to “YES”** (see **Course availability** below), verifying the class roster, informing students how to access and navigate the Bb course and any course requirements concerning student use of Bb.
- Perform optional “end of semester” tasks, such as: downloading and saving/printing the Bb grade book (see **Grade book information** below), exporting or archiving the course and copying materials to a new Bb course (see **Copying, exporting and archiving courses** below).

1.7 ADMINISTRATOR ACCESS/RESPONSIBILITIES

Bb is managed at the NEIU site by one or more Blackboard Administrators (hereafter referred to as “Bb Admins”). The actual Bb servers and hardware are maintained by Blackboard, Inc. at their corporate headquarters. Occasional upgrades and maintenance to the system hardware and



software are scheduled at times that will lessen the impact upon the University. The Bb Admins will provide advance notice of such upgrades. Any information or data discovered about a course site or user during the course of system testing or maintenance will not be shared with any other faculty or user. Bb Admins may access individual Bb sites to solve technical support issues or in response to help queries from Bb course instructors. It is the usual practice of Bb Admins to enter a Bb course only after being invited to do so by the course instructor.

1.9 FACULTY NO LONGER AT NEIU

In the case of a Bb course taught by an instructor who is no longer employed by NEIU, the Department Chair or other senior-level administrator (e.g. Dean) may request access to the course by contacting the Bb Admins at etlt@neiu.edu.

1.10 GUEST LECTURERS

Occasionally, a faculty member may wish to invite an expert from outside the university to interact with students for a session or two. A special guest account for guest lecturers has been created for this purpose. To request a guest lecture account, send an e-mail to etlt@neiu.edu with "Guest Lecturer Request" as the subject header. Include the following information in the e-mail message:

- Name of the NEIU faculty member requesting the guest lecturer account
- Name, title and affiliation of the guest lecturer
- Name, number and section of the course (e.g. MATH 100, section 01)
- Duration of access (beginning and ending dates)

Upon receipt of the information above, a guest lecturer account will be assigned and the faculty member will receive a message via NEIU e-mail with the username, password and duration of the account and instructions for logging in. It is responsibility of the faculty member to provide Bb information and assistance to guest lecturers.

1.11 COURSE ASSISTANTS

Students may be assigned by the Provost, Dean or Department to serve a special role in a course (e.g. peer mentor, tutor). These students are typically not enrolled into Bb courses via the student information system, so special permission must be obtained to enroll students into the course. The Department Chair or senior administrator (e.g. Dean) will send an e-mail to the BbAdmins at etlt@neiu.edu with "Authorization for enrollment of course assistant" as the subject header and containing the following information:

- NetID of the student to be enrolled
- Name of the student to be enrolled
- Name, number and section of the course (e.g. MATH 100, section 01)
- Name of the faculty member teaching the course
- Reason for the student to be enrolled in the Bb course

Course assistants have only the access that other students have in the course.

1.12 AUDITORS

See **Auditor enrollment** below.



1.13 STUDENTS MAKING UP AN INCOMPLETE GRADE

University policy prohibits students who are completing work from a previous course from being added to a future semester of the same course without being formally enrolled in the new course section and without paying the associated tuition/fees.

1.14 COMMUNITY LISTENERS

Community listeners are those participating in free personal enrichment activities on campus, but are not enrolled at NEIU. Community listeners do not receive a NetID and are not enrolled into Bb courses.

1.15 STUDENT COMPUTING SERVICES/HELP DESK

In order to provide timely assistance to students, a “Support” role has been created for Student Computing Services and Help Desk personnel. This allows for viewing of individual student’s enrollment in Bb courses, enrollments of individual Bb courses, and whether or not Bb courses have been made available (see **Course availability** below).

2. COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNICAL ADMINISTRATION

2.1 NEIU_{PORT} TARGETED PERSONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements of general interest to faculty, students or others in the NEIU community may be communicated via targeted personal announcement in the campus portal (NEIU_{port}). These would be limited to items such as planned or unplanned outages and system upgrades.

2.2 NEIU BLACKBOARD RESOURCES WEBSITE

The Bb Resources Website (www.neiu.edu/~ctl/blackboard.html) provides a list of latest and archived announcements, tutorials, reference materials, helps, best practices and other resources for Bb instructors.

2.3 MY NEIU ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEIU Bb Admins have the ability to place announcements on the MY NEIU page in Bb, which can be viewed by all Bb users. Use of this form of communication will be limited to announcements of general interest to Bb users.

2.4 PLANNED OUTAGES

Bb planned outages for system upgrades will be announced 1 week or more in advance in most circumstances. Outages will be announced on the Bb Resources Website, via the BITLIST Listserv, NEIU_{port} targeted announcements, and may be placed in the MY NEIU Announcements. Unplanned or emergency outages will be posted on the places listed above as quickly as possible.

3. COURSE MANAGEMENT

3.1 COURSE CREATION

Several weeks prior to a semester or term, Bb courses are created for all course sections whose information resides in the student information system (Banner/NEIU_{works}). After the first day of



course creation, as new course sections are added to the student information system, Bb courses are created automatically for those courses. Courses are created based upon the standard NEIU course template and are set initially to **unavailable**. The instructor(s) listed in the student information system will be enrolled as the instructor(s) in the course and will be able to see the course in their list of “Courses you are teaching” in Bb. Courses listed in the student information system as taught by “TBA” will be created with no instructor assigned (see **Instructor enrollment** below). Only the instructor(s) will be able to view the course until it is made available (see **Course availability** below). Instructors may modify the course template and copy information from previous courses into the new courses (see **Copying and re-using courses** below).

3.2 COURSE ID AND COURSE NAMES

The Bb course ID and course name are created with information from the student information system. The course name may include abbreviations and truncated words. Course IDs are permanent and may not be changed.

3.3 COPYING AND RE-USING COURSES

Using the “Course Copy” feature, instructors may copy course material from one course to another. For example, material from a course that was taught on Blackboard during Fall semester may be copied to a Spring semester course. Content can only be copied to one course at a time. Courses that are taught periodically (i.e. less than once each year) or courses that are taught occasionally by a given faculty member may be exported for later use (see **Course duration and Copying, exporting and archiving courses** below).

3.4 COURSE SIZE LIMITATIONS (DISK QUOTAS)

At this time, there is no limitation on the size of course sites. The NEIU Bb Admins will work with faculty whose Bb sites contain extremely large files (e.g. audio and video files) to assist them in compressing files in order to minimize download times for their students.

3.5 COURSE AVAILABILITY

New Bb courses are created as “unavailable,” (see **Course creation** above) which means that the instructor assigned to the course in the student information system will see the course, but students will not see the course until the instructor makes it available in the Control Panel by selecting Settings > Course Availability and setting availability to “Yes”. This allows instructors to keep the courses invisible to students while they are being developed. Following the end of a semester and after grades are due, courses from the previous semester will be made unavailable to students by the Bb Admins. If there is a need to make the course available to students after the semester (course runs on an alternative schedule, students working on incompletes, etc.) the instructor may make the course available by going to the Control Panel and select Settings > Course Availability > Yes. It is understood that the instructor will manually make the course unavailable at the completion of the extended availability. Courses will normally remain in the system for two years (see **Course duration** below).

3.6 COMBINED COURSE SECTIONS INTO A SINGLE BB COURSE

If multiple course sections are to be combined into one course on Bb, the instructor should send a request to Bb Admins at etlt@neu.edu. This request must include the course name/number (e.g. Math 100), section numbers (e.g. 01, 02, 31) and the name of each instructor to be included in the



combined course. Enrollments will be combined in the student information system and the course section with the lowest section number will normally be the “master” course containing all student enrollments. The other course sections will need to be left unavailable (see **Course availability** above). Requests for combined sections will be considered until approximately 10 days after the beginning of the semester.

3.7 STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND REMOVAL

Students are enrolled into Bb courses automatically using registration data fed from the student information system into the Bb server by Academic Information Systems. This is performed generally on a daily basis. Neither instructors nor students need to manually enroll or self-enroll into courses. If a student is removed from a course by the student information system (due to dropping the course, non-payment of fees, academic hold, etc.), the student’s enrollment in the course will be disabled in Bb. Disabling causes the student to disappear from the course list, but does not delete the student’s prior work. If a student is re-instated in the class, that student’s Bb account will be enabled.

3.8 INSTRUCTOR ENROLLMENT

Instructors are enrolled into Bb courses automatically using registration data fed from the student information system into the Bb server by Academic Information Systems. This is performed generally on a daily basis. Only the instructor(s) assigned to the course in the student information system will be able to see the course in Bb. Courses listed in the student information system as taught by “TBA” will be listed in Bb with no instructor. In the case of new faculty/instructor hires or changes in teaching assignments, it is imperative that the student information system be updated with the new assignments, so that this information can be fed into the Bb system.

3.9 AUDITOR ENROLLMENT

Students auditing NEIU courses are enrolled into their Bb courses via the student information system, in the same way as for-credit students.

3.10 ONLINE GRADE BOOK INFORMATION

The Bb online grade book is a tool designed for the convenience of students and faculty. It is not an official NEIU record of student grades, nor should it be considered a legally binding record of student scores. Information in a course’s grade book is the sole responsibility of the instructor. The grade book can be downloaded onto the instructor’s computer as an MS Excel file and may also be printed. Instructors are encouraged to periodically download and/or print out a copy of the grade book while the course is in progress, and to download/print a final copy for their records at the conclusion of a course. Grades should never be posted so that students may see other students’ scores or grades. The My Grades feature in Bb allows students to view only their own scores and instructor feedback.

3.11 COURSE DURATION

Courses will normally be kept on the Bb server for approximately two years. After this time, any courses older than two years will be archived and removed from the server by Blackboard. A reminder will be sent to Bb instructors prior to the removal of these courses and they will be encouraged to make an exported or archived copy for themselves, for future reference and use (see **Export Course** or **Archive Course**). To preserve a record of grades, instructors should download and/or print their Bb grade books (see **Grade book Information** above). Faculty members may request that a Bb course be deleted by contacting the NEIU Bb Admins. A course shell that is absent of content may be removed from the Bb server by the Bb Admins.



3.12 COPYING, EXPORTING AND ARCHIVING COURSES

In the course Control Panel there are three different ways to move and store Bb courses or data/materials from Bb courses: Course Copy, Export Course and Archive Course. Each performs a different function and the instructor must decide whether one or more of these will best meet his or her needs.

- **Course Copy:** enables instructors to copy content between courses they are teaching. Instructors open the course with the content they would like to copy and then select another course to receive the content. *When to use Course Copy: When instructors wish to copy content from one Bb course to another (e.g. from one semester to another).*
- **Export Course:** takes *selected course content* and puts it into a compressed (.zip) file that can be stored on a hard drive, USB (Jump) drive, CD-ROM or other storage device. The course instructor can select which content (e.g. course settings, discussion boards, grade book, groups, and tests/surveys/pools) will be exported. It is important to note that student enrollments and interactions (such as grades, assignments and discussion postings) are **NOT** saved in an exported course. *When to use Export Course: When instructors wish to save a “hard copy” of their Blackboard courses for use in a later course (e.g. a course that might not be taught for a year or more).* Exported courses cannot be modified by instructors outside of the Blackboard system (do not uncompress or modify any content in the .zip file), but they can be imported by instructors into a new course (see **Restoring exported course content** below).
- **Archive Course:** takes *the entire course content including student information* and puts it into a compressed (.zip) file that can be stored on a hard drive, USB (Jump) drive, CD-ROM or other storage device. It is important to note that student enrollments and interactions (such as grades, assignments and discussion postings) **ARE** saved in an archived course. *When to use Archive Course: When instructors wish to save a “hard copy” of their complete Blackboard courses, including student enrollments and student interactions.* Archived courses cannot be modified by instructors outside of the Blackboard system and can only be restored by Bb Admins (see **Restoring archived courses** below). On an annual basis, Blackboard, Inc. archives all courses older than 2 years.
- For saving course materials for use in a future course, Export Course is better than Archive Course.

3.13 RESTORING EXPORTED COURSE CONTENT

Exported course content in a .zip folder can be imported into a new course by an instructor using the “Import Package” command in the Control Panel. The course cannot be used or modified outside of Bb. If an exported .zip file is unzipped and modified before importing into Bb, the course may not work correctly.

3.14 RESTORING ARCHIVED COURSES

Archived courses can only be restored into Bb by the NEIU Bb Admins. The course cannot be used or modified outside of Bb. If an exported or archived zip file is unzipped and modified, the course may not work correctly. Instructors who wish to have an archived course restored should deliver the file to the NEIU Bb Admins.

3.15 COURSE CARTRIDGES



Several publishers provide content for Bb courses via a course cartridge that may be imported into a Bb course. Instructors work with the publisher to obtain a download key and to learn how to use the course cartridge within their courses. Instructors should then contact the NEIU Bb Admins with the information needed to build the course.

3.16 TRANSFERRING COURSES TO ANOTHER FACULTY MEMBER

Instructors who wish to transfer Bb course materials to other faculty members may do so either using Export Course (see **Export Course** above) or by contacting the Bb Admins at etlt@neiu.edu.

3.17 FACULTY WHO LEAVE NEIU

Faculty members who leave NEIU for other employment may create exported or archived copies of their Bb courses for their future use. NEIU personnel are not responsible for providing support for courses used outside of Northeastern Illinois University.

4. INFORMATION SECURITY

As with other university records, faculty are cautioned to take care that student information (including, but not limited to, grades, test scores, usernames, or ID numbers) be closely guarded. As noted in the **Grade book information** section above, grades should not be posted so that students may see scores belonging to other class members (for example, do not post grades in a spreadsheet uploaded to the course site).

5. COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE

5.1 POSTING COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS

Faculty are expected to respect the property of others by adhering to copyright law and requesting permission, when appropriate, before using the work of others. Copyright law and fair use guidelines allow faculty to provide limited access to copyrighted materials using the Bb system. By using Bb, users agree to abide by the current NEIU guidelines on copyright and fair use. Instructors are advised to consider the use of NEIU Library's e-reserves system to avoid infringement.

5.2 LINKING TO EXTERNAL SITES FROM BB

Bb provides the capacity for integrating links to other websites into course materials. Instructors may link to other sites, rather than attempting to upload the desired materials directly into their Bb course sites. Linking to NEIU –licensed content through the library alleviates copyright concerns and also retains the integrity of the materials (and associated links) in their original environment. It is the responsibility of the instructor to confirm that links from Bb to external sites are active.

6. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

6.1 OWNERSHIP OF COURSE SITES

NEIU contracts, policies and procedures are the final word on intellectual property rights.
Instructors who create Bb courses retain rights to those materials, including the right to possess an exported or archived copy of the courses that they have created. Instructors who leave NEIU may take an exported copy of their Bb course with them, while the University maintains the rights to



continue using the Bb course, assign other instructors teach the course, and update the course materials as needed.

6.2 SYSTEM MANAGEMENT DATA

Information regarding Bb system performance or usage is considered the property of NEIU. Information regarding specific Bb sites or individual accounts will be held in confidence, to the extent legally permissible, although data may be gathered and presented in aggregated form for professional development activities, such as conference presentations and/or scholarly/industry publication.

AUTHOR REFERENCE

Blackboard Policies: Bradley University, Creighton University, Duke University, LeHigh University, James Madison University, Northern Illinois University, Philadelphia University, University of San Francisco

HISTORY

No history

RELATED POLICIES, DOCUMENTS, AND FORMS

None

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please direct questions concerning this policy to:

Contact	Phone	E-Mail
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