

## Getting Ready for the Start of the Semester

The beginning of the semester involves many Blackboard activities related to your courses, so we would like to review some of the tips that you may find useful at this time.

### Course Availability

Blackboard course sites will automatically be made available to students one week prior to the start of the semester. It is important to have your course syllabus and contact information available to students. You may [hide other areas in your course](#) temporarily if you wish.

### Welcome Students to your Course

Help build student engagement by [creating an announcement](#) for students to see as they enter your Blackboard course. You may wish to include a video introduction, information about how the course will be conducted, and what to expect for the first week of class. Check the Email Announcement setting to send a copy of the announcement as an email to students at the same time for double the impact.

### Copy Content from another Course

Quickly [copy the content and settings](#) of an entire course into a new course, or selectively copy specific areas. The Course Copy option allows you to copy content yourself with just a few clicks. You can also fill out a [Blackboard Request form](#) to have your courses copied and merge sections.

Once your course has been copied, check to make sure all your links are working properly, update any dates/due dates for assignments using the [Date Management tool](#), and hide/remove any items that are no longer needed.

### Grade Center in Blackboard

As you create graded items within your course, these are added to the [Grade Center](#) in the order that they are created. You can manage the graded items and order them accordingly within the Grade Center by going to Manage > Column Organization. You can then move your items into the order you want and this will automatically reorder the items in the Grade Center once you hit submit.

If you are using weighted totals, we can help you set up categories and weights once you have created your graded items. By default, the Grade Center will calculate points by a total and this total will be displayed for students.

There is also a [Blackboard/Campus Connection Grade Import](#) feature that will allow grades to be imported from Blackboard into Campus Connection. You will see a CC Final Grade column in the Blackboard Grade Center in each course, which is pre-configured for this.

### Be a Student in Your Own Course

Two features allow you to “see” your course as a student and to “act” as a student. The **Edit Mode indicator** in the upper right of the screen is a toggle button to view content as your students do. The **Student Preview “eye” icon** (located next to the Edit Mode indicator in the upper right of the screen), can be toggled to enter [Student Preview Mode](#) to see and complete work just as a student would in your course. An orange bar appears at the top when using your Student Preview User role. When exiting Student Preview Mode, you can save your activity as a student in your own course.

### YuJa

[YuJa](#) is a video platform that allows users to host video content and record video lectures that can be used as part of curriculum deployment. YuJa offers many accessibility features, such as captions, transcripts, audio descriptions, and keyboard shortcuts. These features meet ADA requirements and help all students to better understand the content. Captions are automatically generated for all videos created in YuJa and these captions can be edited. Human captioning is also available for accessibility accommodations. Follow this link, [Guide for Making Course Content Accessible](#), for more on accessibility.

### Zoom

[Zoom](#) is a cloud-based videoconferencing and collaboration platform. With Zoom, you have the flexibility to create virtual classrooms and invite students to join from their desktop computers, laptops, tablets, and smartphones. Students can also share content from their devices such as PowerPoint presentations and YouTube videos.

### Respondus Exam Authoring Tool (Compatible with Windows only)

The [Respondus Exam Authoring](#) Tool is used for creating and publishing exams directly to Blackboard. Exams created offline in Microsoft Word or saved in rich text format can be easily converted into a Blackboard exam. The software provides many time-saving tools such as equation editors, web links, and multimedia functions. **An installation password is required and renews each year in August.** Downloading and setup information for the tool is at this link, [Respondus Installation and Setup](#), and will require a login to view the link.

## Infobase (Formerly Hoonuit)

[Infobase](#) is an online professional development and training platform, comprising an extensive library of short, easy-to-understand tutorial videos. It's a great resource for students, faculty, and staff to learn about a wide variety of topics, with subjects ranging from software/applications to career skills and personal development. Instructors are able to [embed Infobase tutorials in Blackboard](#) using the Blackboard integration.

## Consider Course Design and Pedagogy

Review our guide on [Designing and Teaching Online courses](#) for tips for engaging students, creating inclusive courses, assessing, and providing feedback, and other helpful strategies. Use the [Pedagogical Recommendations and Tips](#) guide to learn more about using technology intentionally, establishing a social presence, designing assessments, establishing instructor presence, providing feedback to learners, etc.

## Student Evaluation of Teaching

Include wording in your syllabus about the end of semester student evaluation of teaching ([SELF Evaluations](#)). Sample wording, "Near the end of the semester, you will be asked to complete an online course evaluation form. Your feedback on the course is extremely valuable to me. I read my students' comments carefully and use them to improve the course the next time I teach it". Also, use the first couple of weeks to share examples of how feedback from previous students has helped to shape and improve the course.

## Blackboard Consolidated Mobile App

On Monday, August 8, 2022, Blackboard released an updated consolidated mobile app. The new app combines what were formally separate student and instructor applications into one version. Students using the current Blackboard app should simply update. Instructors, teaching assistants, and graders should download the new app and remove the former Blackboard Instructor app from their devices. For more information, please see our [New Blackboard Mobile App for Students & Instructors](#) help article.

## Resources

The following resources are available to assist you with Blackboard and other Academic Technologies:

**Instructional Design** - Our team of instructional designers are here to help you develop new courses, redesign existing courses, provide course reviews, give recommendations for incorporating new technologies, and more. If you would like to work with an Instructional Designer, please submit a [consultation request](#).

**TTaDA Workshops** - TTaDA offers workshops on a variety of teaching tools and strategies throughout the year. Please visit our website to [register for upcoming sessions](#) or to [view previously recorded sessions](#).

**Academic Technologies** – Visit our [Academic Technologies website](#) to view technology options by category or use the A-Z search to learn about a specific tool for teaching and learning. For faculty assistance with using academic technologies, please call 701-777-2129 or send an email to [UND.academic.technologies@UND.edu](mailto:UND.academic.technologies@UND.edu)

**Blackboard Resources for Instructors Website** – Our [Blackboard Website](#) serves as an online Blackboard user manual with content arranged by topic

**Blackboard Faculty and Student Resource Courses** – Faculty and students have access to the UND Faculty Resource Course or UND Student Resource Course in Blackboard. These Blackboard course sites have information and sample content to help students and faculty become more familiar with Blackboard. The Faculty Resource course is listed with your other Blackboard course sites.

**University Information Technology (UIT)** – [The UIT Help Center](#) is a resource for students to view help articles on issues they may be having with technology or with a course. They can call in with their technical questions, chat with the help desk, or create a ticket.