



## Blackboard Use Policy

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This set of policies is intended to provide members of Stony Brook University community with standardized practices for the Blackboard™ course management system (hereafter Blackboard).

These policies are also intended to insure reliable and consistent service from the Department of Teaching, Learning + Technology's Blackboard support team (hereafter Blackboard support). These policies are subject to change. Do not rely on printed copies of this document without first verifying their accuracy against subsequent updates. Changes to these policies will be posted on the Blackboard support website. Questions regarding these procedures and policies can be sent to: [blackboard@stonybrook.edu](mailto:blackboard@stonybrook.edu)

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## **System and support availability**

Blackboard is funded by the student technology fee and is maintained and supported by the Department of Teaching, Learning + Technology. The system is available 23 hours (each night, the system is unavailable for an hour, around 5am EST, so backups can be done), 7 days a week (excluding scheduled outages). Support is generally available, Monday-Friday, 8am – 6pm, and Saturdays from 10-5pm. School of Professional Development's Online Program (SPD Online/SPD ONLINE) has their own Blackboard support team and supports their faculty and students. Any questions or problems concerning these online classes should first go to the SPD Online program.

## **Who Can Use Blackboard?**

Due to limited resources (such as support staff) and the fact that it is funded by the technology fee, there are restrictions on who can use the system. Blackboard is available to all instructors who are teaching at either the Stony Brook, Southampton or Manhattan Campus. Our Blackboard system is also available to all Academic Departments, Student Service Areas, and Clubs and Organizations recognized by Student Activities.

## **Section I: Access for Faculty, Staff and Students**

Access to Stony Brook's Blackboard course management software, materials, and affiliated online tools will be granted as follows:

**ONE USER ACCOUNT** – All SBU students, faculty, and staff have one Blackboard user account that will be used for all of their Blackboard activities. Each registered student will be assigned a Blackboard account. It is important that users are aware that they are responsible for all activity conducted with their accounts and therefore should not share their login information with anyone.

**USERNAME / PASSWORDS**– In order to use Blackboard a campus net id username and password is required. Users must set up their campus net id by logging into the solar system: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/solarsystem>

**Guest instructors** - - A limited number of users who are not officially affiliated with SBU (Guest lecturers for example) may be provided accounts that are for Blackboard use only. Usernames and passwords will be created at the request of a sponsor. These accounts are considered temporary for the semester. Such accounts are assigned only to individuals who are working with SBU faculty/staff on officially recognized activities on the Blackboard system.

**GUEST ACCESS** – The Blackboard system will allow an individual without an account to access specific areas of course sites. By default, the system is set so that “guests” may not access a course. Instructors do have the option of changing this setting on their courses. Information is available on the Blackboard support website.

**STUDENT ACCESS** – Each semester, a blackboard site is created for every course. However, it is up to the faculty member to make the Blackboard site available for their students. Students who are registered for classes that are using Blackboard will be given full access to those course sites no later than the first official day of classes for each semester. Instructors may, at their discretion, add currently enrolled SBU students to their course site if they are not registered for the course. Online instructors should not add any students to their class sites without first contacting SPD Online or the appropriate department office. Students who register after the first day of the semester will be added to the course within 1 business day during the add/drop period of the semester. Students who drop a course should no longer see that course on their Blackboard site 48 hours after they have officially dropped a course. SOLAR is the official record of enrolled and dropped courses.

**FACULTY/STAFF ACCESS:** Accounts are automatically created for faculty once they are scheduled to teach a course in PeopleSoft. Non teaching faculty & staff will be given accounts upon request. When Blackboard course sites are created, only those listed in SOLAR as instructors & TA's are automatically added. Additional faculty & TA's must be added by the Primary Instructor. The only time the Blackboard support staff will add faculty into an existing course is if the previous instructor is no longer at the University and we receive a request from the department chair.

**LENGTH OF ACCESS TO COURSE SITES:** At the end of each semester, faculty have the option of making their course unavailable. Students are kept in previous semesters courses until the "Last day to change an Incomplete" the following semester. Instructors will receive a notice via e-mail when rosters will be deleted. It is the responsibility of the Instructor to export (download) and print out their Gradebook and any other documentation of student work in the event of future grade dispute prior to the roster deletion date. Information on how to export the Gradebook is available on the Blackboard support website: <http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/blackboard/faculty.shtml>.

**LENGTH OF ACCESS TO STONY BROOK'S BLACKBOARD SYSTEM:** Students will have access to Stony Brook's Blackboard system until they are no longer registered for at least one course at Stony Brook University and their Stony Brook e-mail account is no longer active. Faculty and Staff will have access until they are no longer employed by Stony Brook University and their Stony Brook e-mail account is no longer active.

## **Section II: Course / Organization Management**

**COURSES KEPT ON THE BLACKBOARD SERVER** – Course sites will remain on the Blackboard server for 3 years after the course has ended. Faculty who wish to have their courses removed sooner must change the name of their course to "Please Delete". Information on how to change the course title is available on the Blackboard Support Website. Instructors will receive notification when their class is scheduled for deletion. It is the responsibility of Instructors to archive their courses.

**COURSE QUOTA LIMITATIONS** – At this time, there is no limitation on the amount of space allotted to each course site (in other words, there is no quota). It is important to understand that large files may take an extremely long time for students to access – especially if multiple students are attempting to access them at the same time. The Blackboard support team will work with faculty whose Blackboard sites contain extremely large files to provide advice and assistance to help them compress files in order to utilize space as efficiently as possible and reduce download time.

**TRANSFERRING COURSE SITES** – An Instructor may elect to transfer a course site and its materials to another faculty member or give another faculty members access to a course. A course site will not be re-assigned to a new instructor for reuse without written permission from the original instructor. If the primary instructor is no longer available, then the request must be submitted in writing to the Blackboard support team by the Department Chair or appropriate authorized personnel. If instructors leave Stony Brook University for other employment, they may request to have their course deleted and/or request a copy of their course site(s) to take along. Arrangements can also be made to have their course site transferred electronically to their new institution, where it may be usable (within technological limits).

**REQUESTING A BLACKBOARD COURSE SITE** - Blackboard course sites are automatically generated prior to the beginning of each semester for all courses that are scheduled in PeopleSoft. By default, course sites are set to “unavailable” which means Instructors can see the site but student’s cannot. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to make their course available for students. E-mail notification is sent to all primary instructors when their Blackboard course is created, and the contents of the e-mail explain how to make a course available for students. Instructors who wish to combine multiple sections into one course site may submit a request on-line via the Blackboard help site: <http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/blackboard/faculty.shtml> It is the responsibility of the instructor to submit this request every semester as old course sites cannot be reused and we do not have an automated way of combining sections. .

**REQUESTING A BLACKBOARD ORGANIZATION SITE** – Academic Departments, Student Service Areas and all Registered Clubs and Organizations can request a Blackboard site for their group. The Blackboard Support Team will enroll the Academic Department major/minor organization sites based on information received from the Peoplesoft system. It is the responsibility of the Student Service Areas and the Registered Clubs and Organizations to enroll users. Please see the Blackboard Support website : <http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/blackboard/faculty.shtml> to locate the appropriate request form.

**REQUESTING A BLACKBOARD ANNOUNCEMENT MODULE** - - Student service areas who wish to post announcements on the Blackboard system may request a Blackboard Module. See the Blackboard support website for additional information.

**GRADEBOOK INFORMATION** – The Blackboard Online Gradebook is a communication tool between Faculty and students. It exists so that faculty can legally post students individual grades without violating FERPA. Grades posted in Blackboard are not automatically posted to the SOLAR System. Thus it is not an official record of the student grades, nor should it be considered a legally binding record of student scores. Faculty are strongly encouraged to periodically save or print a copy of the Online Gradebook and to print a final copy for their records after the semester ends. In addition, faculty who post grades in areas other than the Gradebook area of their course site may be in violation of FERPA (Family Education Rights & Privacy Act) if any part of a student's ID is used : <http://ws.cc.stonybrook.edu/registrar/ferpa.htm> Should information that violates FERPA be posted on a Blackboard site and it is brought to our attention, the Blackboard support team will make that item unavailable and notify the instructor.

**ONLINE QUIZZES/SURVEYS** –Blackboard does provide instructors the ability to conduct online quizzes / surveys. This feature is only available for classes where enrollment is fewer than 900 students. **Blackboard's test feature should not be used to conduct on-line midterms and final exams without consultation with the Blackboard support team.** The availability and response of the Blackboard system can never be guaranteed. If the use of a quiz affects the stability of the system, the Blackboard support team reserves the right to suspend that activity.

**COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL** –When posting materials on Blackboard, faculty are expected to abide by copyright laws. For more information visit: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/provost/facultyinfo> or contact Susan Lieberthal in the Melville Library at: [susan.lieberthal@stonybrook.edu](mailto:susan.lieberthal@stonybrook.edu) or 631-632-9951.

**ACCESSIBILITY** – In order to comply with the NYS Mandatory Technology Standard S04-001 (available at: <http://www.oft.state.ny.us/policy/s04-001/index.htm>), all instructors are expected to abide by the following guidelines.

**Course Menu:** Leave the default setting of their course menu options as Text and not change them to Buttons. The Blackboard support team reserves the right to change any menus that are changed to buttons to ensure that all course sites are accessible.

**Course Design:** When changing the default design, it is very important that the menu have contrasting colors. In other words, if you choose a light background, the text should be dark, and vice versa. Avoid light & bright colors (Such as oranges, yellows, reds) as students with visual problems have trouble seeing those colors.

**Virtual Classroom:** If participation is required and is being graded, please be aware that students who have visual problems may not be able to participate in “Virtual Discussion” that may occur in the Virtual Classroom. The Whiteboard is not an accessible tool. We are not sure when this will be corrected, but ask that in the meantime you not penalize those students.

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**Colors:** When posting Items and choosing colors for titles, avoid light & bright colors (Such as oranges, yellows, reds) as students have trouble seeing those colors.

**Timed Quizzes:** If you are using the quizzing feature of Blackboard and have opted to set up timed sessions, please know that you may have to make other arrangements for some students. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the Disabled Student Services office if they need more time on exams. DSS will notify the instructor when appropriate.

**ROLES –** Roles control access to the content and tools within a course. Each user is assigned a role for each Course (or Organization) in which they participate. For example, a User with a role of Teaching Assistant in one Course can have a role of Student in another Course. Instructors may use these roles to delegate some of the responsibility for maintaining the course.

**Instructor:** Users who have the role of Instructor have complete access to the Control Panel in a Blackboard course, they can add/remove content & users. Instructors can also change others roles in a class.

**Teaching Assistant :** Teacher's Assistant has access to nearly everything in the Course Control Panel. If the course is unavailable to students, Teaching Assistants may still access the course. TA's can do everything the Instructor can, except remove the Instructor. This role is appropriate for Faculty, Staff and Graduate TA's. It is not for undergraduate TA's as they then have access to other undergraduates' information (Grades, ID#'s, etc).

**Course Builder:** The Course Builder role has access to most areas of the Course Control Panel. This role is appropriate for a research assistant or for an assistant who has limited responsibilities and should not have access to student grades. Undergraduate TA's must be assigned this role instead of the Teaching Assistant role.

**Grader:** The Grader role has limited access to the Course Control Panel. A Grader would assist the Instructor in the creation, management, delivery, and grading of Assessments and Surveys. A Grader may also assist the Instructor with adding manual entries to the Online Gradebook. Graders do not have the ability to post content.

**Student:** Student is the default Course User Role. A user with the role of Student has no access to the Course Control Panel.

**Guest:** Users with the role of Guest have no access to the Course Control Panel. Instructors can make areas within a course accessible to Guests. Guests do not have access to the communication tools, such as e-mail or the discussion board

## Blackboard Use Policy

### **Questions?**

If you have any questions regarding this Blackboard Policy, kindly contact:  
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Stony Brook University