

3Rs: Review, Refresh, and Refine Your Blackboard Skills



You're spending much time online using Blackboard to build and teach your Fall 2021 courses. How comfortable are you with the skills needed to teach your course? Now's time for the **3 Rs**, to **Review, Refresh, & Refine** your Blackboard skills. Check the list of basic skills and links in the table, "Check Your Basic Blackboard Skills" below.

For help with **Blackboard technology skills**, please contact ITS Blackboard Courses Support at Mason (courses@gmu.edu).

For help with **how to teach in Blackboard**, please contact Stearns Center Digital Learning (stearns@gmu.edu).

Check Your Basic Blackboard Skills

Here is a list of the basic skills needed to teach most courses in Blackboard (click on each link to review Blackboard Help Information for instructors):

- ✓ [Post the course syllabus](#)
- ✓ [Access the course roster](#)
- ✓ [Create and update course content pages](#)
- ✓ [Add announcements](#)
- ✓ [Send email and private course mail messages](#)
- ✓ [Create and post to discussion forums](#)
- ✓ [Manage student assignment submissions](#)
- ✓ [Create and add questions to tests, surveys and quizzes](#)
- ✓ [How to set-up and use online proctoring tools \(such as Respondus LockDown Browser\)](#)
- ✓ [Set-up and use the gradebook](#)
- ✓ [Hold online office hours \(using Collaborate Ultra or Zoom\)](#)



Use Stearns Center Digital Learning's Blackboard Template to help you set up and organize your online course. [Review this brief lesson](#) about how to request a sandbox course which includes our Blackboard template.

If You're New to Online Teaching, Keep It Simple!

If you are new to online teaching, focus on mastering the **basic** Blackboard skills. **Keep It Simple!** Make sure you master and feel comfortable with Blackboard functions & tools. Don't get bogged down or overwhelmed by including many (external) tools in your course, just for technology's sake. Make sure that the technology tools you use all serve and support your learning outcomes, and also enhance the student learning experience. Focus on being present, available and active in your online course.

Keep it simple the first time around!

If a particular tool is critical or essential for teaching and learning in your course, subject area or discipline, please make sure that you learn how to use and incorporate such tools skillfully. For example:

- In disciplines where real-time interactions are important (e.g., Modern Languages; Communications), you'll likely need to use synchronous platforms (i.e., [Collaborate Ultra](#) or [Zoom](#)) to converse with individual students and/or with the entire class. Also try [VoiceThread](#) or [Harmonize](#) to enhance asynchronous online interactions and engagement. These tools allow for interactive multimedia experiences in Blackboard. Please contact [Stearns Center](#) for more information about accessing VoiceThread and Harmonize for your online course.
- In disciplines in which objective quizzes or tests are important (e.g., Accounting), then make sure you master how to create, edit, and auto-grade [online quizzes or tests in Blackboard](#).
- If your tests and exams require proctoring, then learn how to use the proctoring tools, [Respondus Monitor and Lockdown Browser](#), available in your Blackboard course.
- Learn more about tools! Check out Stearns Center's handout, "[Actively Engaging Students in Asynchronous Online Classes](#)" for tips on using web-based tools inside and outside of Blackboard, to provide opportunities for students to engage with one another.

Finding Blackboard Help at Mason

Where to get Blackboard Technical Help at Mason? Please contact [ITS Courses Support](#) | E-mail courses@gmu.edu | Phone: 703-993-8870 | Website: [GMU ITS Blackboard Instructional Support for Faculty](#)

Where to Find Help for How to Teach in Blackboard? Please contact [Stearns Center Digital Learning](#) for help integrating technology tools (including Blackboard tools) for teaching your online and hybrid courses (see our contact info below). You also may submit your questions [here](#) to our help portal; our Digital Learning Team will respond to you promptly via email.

Contact Us!

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