Blackboard Quick Start Guide for Students

Accessing your Blackboard Account

1. Go to https://mvcc.blackboard.com. Please bookmark or add this site to your Favorites by clicking Ctrl + D on your keyboard or the Macintosh equivalent. The current preferred browsers for the best experience are Firefox which you may obtain for free from www.mozilla.com or from the App Store and Chrome which you may obtain for free at https://www.google.com/chrome/ or from the App Store. Neither Internet Explorer nor Edge are approved browsers and Blackboard may not function properly when using those browsers.

2. Please make sure that you have JavaScript, cookies and pop-ups enabled in your browser for our site. You may find a browser checker here:
   https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support/Browser_Checker
   a. If needed, you may find instructions for enabling JavaScript here:
      https://online.suny.edu/support/adjust-javascript-settings/, instructions for enabling cookies here:
      https://online.suny.edu/support/enable-cookies-in-blackboard/ and you may find instructions for
      enabling pop-ups here: https://online.suny.edu/support/how-to-adjust-browser-pop-up-blockers/.

   If you need any assistance in adjusting your browser settings, please contact the Educational Technologies office at online@mvcc.edu, by telephone at 315-792-5501.

3. Enter your Blackboard Username and Password using the following formats:

   Your Blackboard Username:
   First name initial, your entire last name, and day of your birth in DD format.
   Examples:
   John Doe with a date of birth of 01/01/2000 would enter his Blackboard username as jdoe01

   Mary Patterson with a date of birth of 12/23/2000 would enter her Blackboard username as mpatterson23

   This is the same username you use to access your MVCC student email account.
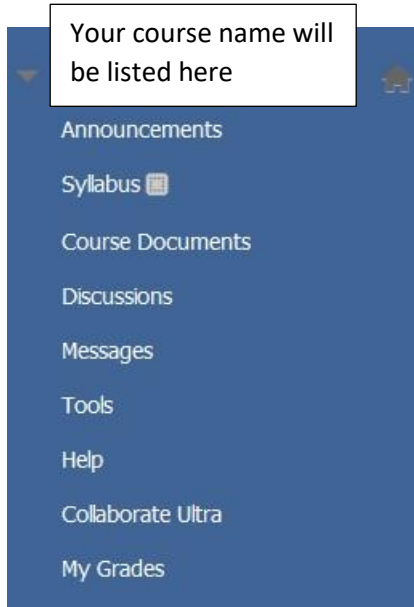
   Your Blackboard Password:
   Your Blackboard Password will initially be either the last four digits of your Social Security Number or, if you did not provide your Social Security Number to MVCC, the last four digits of your M Number. If you have logged into Blackboard previously and do not remember your password, please select the "Forgot Your Password" link for assistance during regular business hours.

Navigating in Blackboard

Once logged into your Blackboard Account, you should see the Blackboard Orientation course located in your My Courses areas. If you are not familiar with our online course format, we strongly recommend working through the Orientation. It can take up to 3-4 hours to complete in total and does not need to be done in one sitting.

Located in the same area, you should see a list of your currently available courses. Please click on any one of your courses to follow along to the next few steps:

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1. Within each course, you should see a left sidebar that looks similar to the following. Each professor has the ability to re-arrange items, add items, and remove items so the left sidebar in each course may be different:

Your course name will be listed here

Announcements

Syllabus 🔲

Course Documents

Discussions

Messages

Tools

Help

Collaborate Ultra

My Grades

   a. **Announcements** – Important information that the professor would like to share with the entire class can be found in the Announcements area. Some professors also send a copy of these announcements via email to your MVCC Student Email Account, some pre-load their announcements and the option to email it in addition to posting it is not available for those announcements, so please keep an eye on this area for important information about your class. Here are a few examples of Course Announcements:

   Module 1 Due February 16 by Midnight

   Posted on: Thursday, December 17, 2020 11:51:51 AM EST

   All required work for Module 1 (Introductory Discussion, Quiz 1, Test 1) will be due prior to midnight on February 16...

   Welcome to Class!

   Posted on: Thursday, December 17, 2020 11:48:34 AM EST

   Welcome! I just wanted to take a moment to introduce myself to you. I have been teaching here for...

   b. **Syllabus** – Many professors post course syllabus information, rubrics, course schedules, instructor contact information, etc. and any other like information in this area. Some professors post their Syllabus in a separate folder directly within the Learning Modules area.
   c. **Course Documents/Learning Units** – In most courses, you will find the bulk of course content and activities such as discussion forums, quizzes, tests, lectures, written assignment or dropbox areas, etc. This is where you will see assignments and participate in your course. More information on content you may encounter in the Course Documents/Learning Units/Learning Modules area will be provided later in this document. Some professors do create separate Content areas in the left sidebar for each learning module, so courses will vary based on instructor preferences.
   d. **My Grades** – In some courses, you will find a My Grades area in the left sidebar. The My Grades area is where you can view your current Overall Course Grade, individual assignment grades, instructor comments, review rubrics provided and review your assignment submissions in many cases.

e. **Messages/Email** – In this area, you may contact your professor and/or classmates. For fully online courses, we request that all communications possible be made within the Messages area to keep a record within the course itself unless otherwise directed by your Professor.

   a. **To send a Message in Blackboard to your Professor:**
   -Click the Messages link located in the left sidebar.
   -Click the Create Message button located at the top of the Messages area.
   -In the Recipients are, click the To button. You will be presented with a list of potential recipients to select from, your professor will be indicated by (Instructor) after their name:
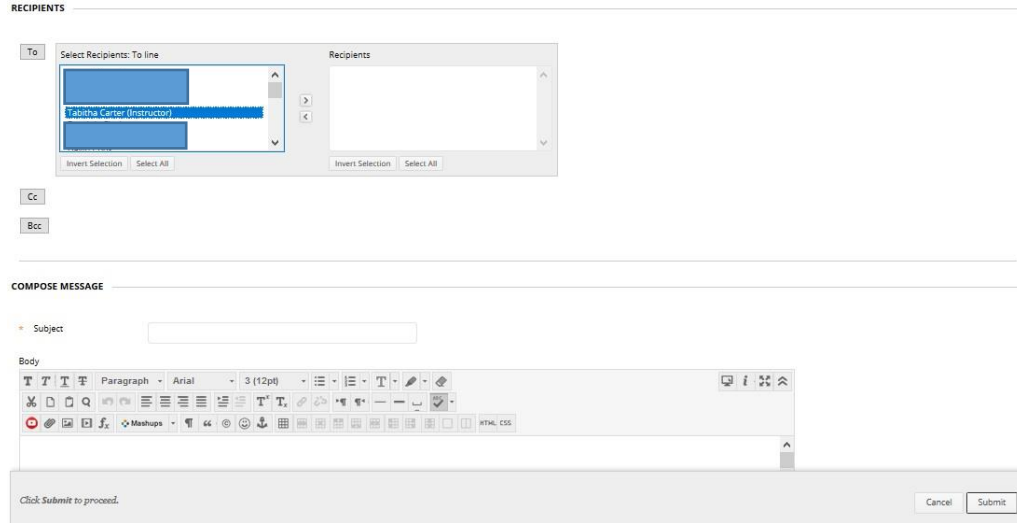
   Click the right pointing arrow to move the intended recipient to the right Recipients area.
   -Enter your Subject (a required field) and then enter your Message in the Body area. Please be sure to put a question mark at the end of any questions.
   -Click Submit to send your Message.

f. Help – You can access Blackboard Student Help Information from this link.

g. The next few links you see (Collaborate Ultra) are specific to the course that this menu was pulled from. Some instructors add their own internal and external links to the left sidebar and some do not. It is a personal choice for the professor.

Typical Items You May Find in the Learning Modules Area:

1. Folders: Folders help professors organize related content and are preceded by the following icon:

2. Pages: Pages present information, such as lectures or other information and are preceded by the following icon:

3. Files: Instructors will sometimes provide files for you for a variety of reasons. In most cases, it is a Powerpoint for your to review, a file you need to completed an assignment such as a Word Document or Excel Spreadsheet, but could indicate just about any kind of file provided. They are preceded by the following icon:

4. Discussion Forums: Discussion Forums are an interactive part of the course where you will go to participate in class discussions virtually. They are preceded by this icon:

To participate in a Discussion Forum:

    a.   Click on the Discussion Forum name to enter the forum.

           i.   To create a new thread, click the Create Thread button in the upper right corner of that area. Enter your Subject and the Message for your initial post. Click Submit when you have completed your post. Some professors will allow you to Edit and/or Delete your own posts, some do not, so please take care when composing your Message. Ideally, your Subject would be a short summary of the main theme of your forum post.

          ii.   To reply to an existing thread, click on the post you would like to reply to and click the Reply button located at the bottom of the post:

Enter your Subject and Message, then click Submit. Please be aware, your Reply menu may have fewer options depending on your instructor's preference and it may vary from forum to forum in the same course.

5.   Web links: Web links would take you to a different website. Sometimes they are set to open in the same window and sometimes they will open on a new browser tab, so that your course content remains in the background.

6.   Written Assignments: Written Assignments are an interactive part of the course where you may be required to submit any written assignments required by your professor. Some professors allow you to type your assignment in the text area provided, others may require that you submit an attachment. Either way, we strongly recommend that you type all assignments into a locally stored word processing document just in case you should encounter any technical issues while working on your assignment. If you want to use the Write Submission area to submit your work rather than submitting an attachment, you may simply copy your work from your locally saved document and paste it into the Write Submission area using Ctrl + V on your keyboard. Please be aware that you may lose important document formatting when using this method as opposed to submitting your file as an attachment where all formatting would be preserved as you intended.

To submit your work by copying and pasting, please click on the Write Submission button and paste your work

into the Text Submission area which will appear.

Or, you may click the Browse My Computer button to submit your work as an attachment. Unless otherwise specified by your professor, most attachments are required in either a Word (docx) or PDF (pdf) format.

7. Test/Quizzes: Tests, quizzes, mid-terms and finals are all interactive parts of your course and different professors may label them differently. They are preceded by the following icon:

When you click on the link to access your test, quiz, etc., you may see something like the following, depending on what options your professor has selected:

Begin: Exam 1

INSTRUCTIONS

Timed Test	This test has a time limit of 1 hour.
Timer Setting	This test will save and submit automatically when the time expires.
Force Completion	This test can be saved and resumed at any point until time has expired. The timer will continue to run if you leave the test.
Multiple Attempts	This test allows multiple attempts.
Due Date	This Test is due on September 10, 2020 11:00:00 AM EDT.

Click **Begin** to start: Exam 1. Click **Cancel** to go back.
You will be previewing this assessment and your results will not be recorded.

Click Begin to start. Click Cancel to quit.

Cancel   Begin

If the test is timed, it will be noted here so that you will know to plan accordingly prior to clicking the Begin button to start your exam. Some other options that may or may not appear, depending on how your professor elects to setup their exam: indication of whether or not the exam will automatically submit if timed, whether or not you may leave the exam and return (if timed, the timer will continue running and you will need to return prior to the time running out,) whether or not the professor allows multiple attempts, due dates and times, etc.

Viewing your Grades – Individual Assignment Grades and Overall Grades

Within some of your courses, whether fully online, hybrid, real time remote or face to face, you may find a My Grades area located within the left sidebar. Click on that My Grades link at any time to review your individual assignment grades, any feedback provided electronically by your professor, to review any submitted online exams within the parameters set by your professor, to review assignments you have submitted but that have not yet been graded, etc.

For the Overall Grade column (may be named differently within each of your courses, some professor prefer to use Final Grade, Course Grade, etc. to label that column,) if you click on the Grading Criteria link located beneath it, you may view a breakdown of how your overall grade is determined within that course. Please be sure to contact your professor via Messages or Email, whichever they specify, with any questions about how your grade is determined. Please see a sample partial My Grades screenshot below:

My Grades

ITEM	LAST ACTIVITY	GRADE
Overall Grade View Description Grading Criteria		-
M1 - Beginner Review 1 Timed Writings	UPCOMING	-
Module 1 - 1 Minute Timed Writing Timed Writings	UPCOMING	-
M1 - Icebreaker All Assignments Completed	UPCOMING	-
All - M1 - Beginner Part 1 All Assignments Completed	UPCOMING	-
M2 - Beginner Review 2 Timed Writings	UPCOMING	-
Module 2 - 1 Minute Timed Writing Timed Writings	UPCOMING	-

To view all of your assignments and grades, please be sure that the All button at the top of that screen is selected. **It is very important to check your My Grades report often and to ask any questions you may have about your assignments and grades as they are graded.**

To Review the Results of your Assessment:

Visit your My Grades Report and click on the Assessment name. For example:

On the next page click on your grade in the Calculated Grade column to review any information on your assessment that the professor allows.

Or you may return to the assessment itself and click the Begin button. If there was only one attempt allowed, you will be taken to a page that will allow you the options to either return to the course (Back to Course) or View All Attempts. If multiple attempts were allowed, you will be taken to a page that will allow you the options to return to the course (Back to Course,) View All Attempts or Start New Submission. Clicking on View All Attempts will allow you the option to click on your Calculated Grade to view any information on your assessment that the professor allows. Please see example of a page that allows multiple attempts where only one attempt was taken below:

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