



GVSU Blackboard Ultra – New Semester Checklist for Faculty

Accessing Blackboard

Log in at lms.gvsu.edu using your GVSU network credentials. For help with authentication, visit [Getting Started with Okta](#) in our service portal.

Note: If your assigned courses aren't shown, contact your department office to confirm you are listed as the instructor of record in Banner.

Upload Content & Set Due Dates

Instructors can add course materials by uploading or creating content in Blackboard. Refer to the [Blackboard Content knowledge base article](#) for detailed information on how to add content.

Note: Instructors must update any content copied from previous semesters, especially due dates! This is especially valuable after a course copy from a previous semester. *See this article: [Batch Edit](#) for using the batch edit function for editing content/dates in Bb Ultra. Due dates sync with the course calendar, mobile app, and notification areas which help students stay on track.*

Default Blackboard Layout

Please note that each course includes a course template with suggested design considerations. Ensure content is visible or set release conditions.

Suggested Course Menu Use

- **Announcements:** Post updates and reminders.
- **About the Course:** Syllabus, schedule, welcome video, and first-day activities.
- **Week 1 Module:** Start organizing content by week or topic.
- **Communications Toolkit (Instructor-only):** Optional email templates and messaging ideas for communicating with students.

Check Accessibility with Ally

Use [Ally indicators](#) next to your uploaded files for accessibility feedback and improvements. By clicking a dial/indicator, Ally provides recommendations to improve the accessibility of your files.

Set Up the Gradebook

Students appreciate timely feedback and the ability to see how they are performing in the course. Double-check your grade settings, especially after a course copy.

See our [Gradebook setup guide](#) found in our service portal.

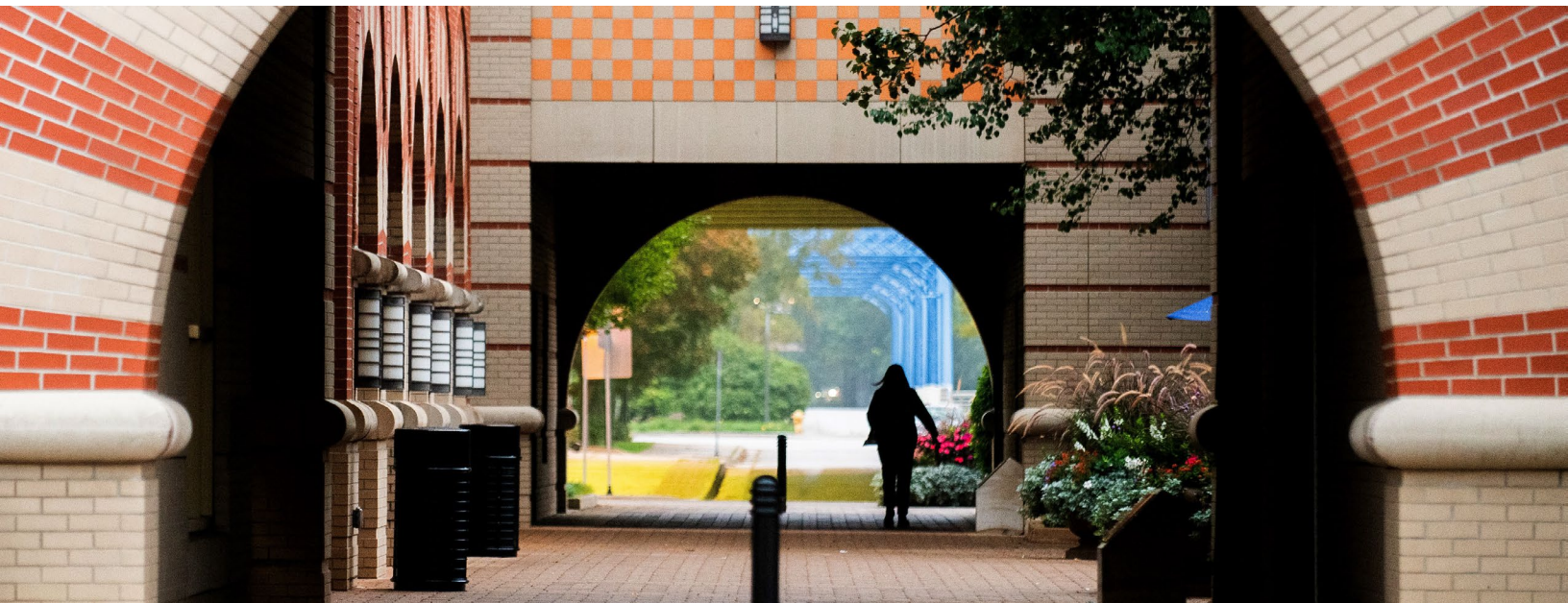
Connect & Communicate with Your Students

It's always a good idea to post a Welcome Announcement or [create an Announcement](#) (also sent as an email) for your students once you have made your Blackboard site available. You can even encourage them to review the syllabus/ schedule and required textbooks before your first-class meeting.

Encourage Students to Set Up Their Blackboard Profile Picture & Complete the Digital Skills for College Success Course

We know that students are better engaged when their instructors learn their names. We would encourage you to ask students to update their Blackboard profile picture. These photos show up in several areas of your Blackboard course site.

- Students will need to follow these [instructions to update their profile picture](#).
- All students and faculty are enrolled in a [Digital Skills for College Success Blackboard Course](#). It includes three modules: Cybersecurity, Essential Tech Skills and a Blackboard Online/Hybrid Orientation. Each module takes approximately 20–25 minutes to complete, and students can earn a certificate upon completion.



Open Courses to Students

Courses are closed by default. Once ready with updates to your course content, make your course "open" via [Course Settings](#).

Note: The student roster for your class is updated every 3 hours from Banner to reflect accurate enrollments.

Need Help?

- Visit the Service Portal – Self-help articles and guides – services.gvsu.edu
- Email: it@gvsu.edu
- Review and register for an eLearning Webinar – gvsu.edu/elearn
- Call: (616) 331-2101 | Mon–Fri, 8 AM–4 PM | 24x7 after-hours support available

