Blackboard - New Semester Checklist for GVSU Faculty

☑ Logging into Blackboard (mybb.gvsu.edu)

Login to Blackboard to access your courses. A shortcut to Blackboard is also on the GVSU homepage at gvsu.edu You will be prompted to enter your GVSU username/password to access Blackboard.

Please note: If the courses you have been assigned to teach are not showing up in your list of courses, please contact your departmental office coordinator to make sure that you are listed as the instructor of record in Banner.

☑ Setting Availability for your Course (Turning "ON" your Course for your Students)

All Blackboard courses are unavailable to your students while you build and organize content. Once you are ready to make your course visible, go to the specific course → select Control Panel → select Customization → select Properties. Under "Set Availability", choose "Yes", and click Submit. Repeat these steps for each course that needs to be made visible to your students. You can also use the Qwickly Module to set availability, mass email and announcements.

Please note: The student roster for your class is updated every three hours from Banner to reflect accurate enrollments. Instructors do not need to worry about making changes to their class list because this is an automated process that occurs between Banner and Blackboard.

☑ Uploading and Organizing Content

It is very important that you update any content that was copied from previous semesters, especially due dates! Due dates are extremely valuable to students! Instructors can customize their Blackboard course menu and this can be extremely beneficial in meeting individual class needs. Listed below are a few suggestions on how to use the various Content areas found in your Blackboard course:

Announcements: This area is used to display updates, reminders and announcements posted by the instructor. When a student enters a Blackboard course, this area appears as their default screen.
Syllabus: This area is used to display general information about the course such as a syllabus, as well as your course schedule.
Documents: This area is used to provide the majority of the information delivered to students online, such as lecture notes, PowerPoint slides, reading materials, study guides, outlines…etc.
Assignments: This area is designed to hold course assignments, test, quizzes, or surveys. Students may also submit assignments in this area if the instructor has enabled the assignment manager tool.
Discussions: This is an area that allows students/instructors to have online discussions by posting questions, comments and responses through the use of forums and threads.
Instructor Information: General contact information (phone numbers, email addresses, office locations...etc. for the faculty can be listed in this area.
Grades: Students can use this area to check their grades. Additional tools are also available in this area.
Help: This area will link students and faculty to the GVSU Blackboard support materials.

☑ Customizing your Blackboard Site

Instructors can change the color of their course menu, as well as add a course banner. To make these changes, go to the Control Panel area, → select Customization and → select Teaching Style.

☑ Copying Course Content/Material from Previous Semesters

The copy course function enables instructors to copy content from other courses. Instructors can select areas, such as content areas, the Grade Center, the Discussion Board, Assignments…etc., to copy from one course to another.

Please note: You must be listed as an instructor in both courses to order to copy content.

1. Go to the Control Panel of the course that has the content you wish to copy (such as a course from a previous semester) and → select Packages and Utilities and then → select Course Copy. Leave the copy type set to "Copy course Materials into an Existing Course".
2. Click on the browse button.
3. Select the course you wish to copy content into by selecting the appropriate radio button from the list provided, or you can search by instructor name with your Blackboard username.
4. Once you have selected the course and placed a check in the appropriate radio button, click → Submit in the lower right corner of the screen.
5. Check the areas you wish to copy (Course Information, Course Documents, Assignments, External Links, Contacts, Discussion Board, Grade Center Columns and Settings..,etc) and click → Submit.

☑ Reviewing Accessibility of Files with Ally and Checking Web Links (external URLs)

For content you have uploaded, review the level of accessibility of your files using the dial indicators in Blackboard Ally: gvsu.edu/elearn/help/ally Remove or replace any broken links that lead to external web sites as URLs can change.

☑ Setting up the Grade Center

A good practice is to provide timely feedback to students and there is no better way than to take advantage of the gradebook in Blackboard. More information on how to use the Grade Center, including the various tools that you can use to provide personal feedback can be found at: gvsu.edu/elearn/help/ If you have copied over your Grade Center from a previous semester, you'll want to confirm online gradebook settings are accurate for total assessment.

☑ Emailing your Students using Blackboard

Instructors can send email to individual users, to groups of users, or all users in a course. Select Email → select all users or selected individual users. Instructors can also send email to individual students, or selected students via the Grade Center.

Please note: It's always a good idea to post a welcome Announcement, or email your students once you have made your Blackboard site available. You can even encourage them to review the syllabus/ schedule and required textbooks prior to your first class meeting.

☑ Assisting your Students with Blackboard

Each Blackboard course has a "Help" menu item. Clicking on this menu item leads the user to the eLearning website which provides handouts and video clips on using Blackboard and Collaborate products. Blackboard questions can also be directed to bbadmin@gvsu.edu or by calling (616) 331-2101. It's always a good idea to take a few minutes at the start of the semester and demonstrate to your students how you are expecting them to use your Blackboard site.

☑ Learning your Students' Names with the Class Photo Roster

Each Blackboard course has a Class Photo Roster that can assist you in learning your students' names.
 Step 1 – Enter your course in Blackboard.
 Step 2 – Under Control Panel, click the Course Tools drop down.
 Step 3 – Click Class Photo Roster.

☑ Additional Training and Support Materials for Instructors

Throughout the year, eLearning and Emerging Technologies provides several hands-on workshops. To register for a workshop, go to the following address: gvsu.edu/sprout and log into the Seminar system using your GVSU username/password. Additional Blackboard help materials and tutorials can be found at: gvsu.edu/elearn/help/