Using Blackboard for Academic Continuity

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[There are a number of Blackboard tools](#) that can be used to create and post content, connect with your students, and assess them. We recommend that you avoid adopting tools that create unnecessary access barriers (i.e. requiring an additional purchase of an access code or creating additional usernames/passwords to third party tools). Understand that students may rely on mobile devices to access course content and that Blackboard is a mobile friendly learning management system which provides accessible and alternative content.

Online learning experiences can take two forms: synchronous and asynchronous. Whenever possible, we recommend using your Blackboard site as a place where students can access learning materials at a time of their own choosing (in other words, asynchronously). One of the benefits of this approach is that it cuts down on scheduling challenges. If you do need to meet synchronously—meaning that everyone is online at the same time, much like in a "webinar"—we recommend that you use [Blackboard Collaborate Ultra](#). In addition to being used for class meetings, Collaborate is great for students completing group work, holding virtual office hours, and advising students.

Getting your Blackboard course site ready

- Make sure you can log into [Blackboard](#) and access your courses.
- Review this [Getting Start Guide](#) about using Blackboard.

- Add your Syllabus & other course content. Remind your students that all official University emails (including messages sent through Blackboard) are sent to their GVSU email address and **they should be checking it several times a day**.

- Create a personalized announcement greeting your students and providing detailed explanations about how to proceed online in your Bb course.

- Make sure your students know about the free Blackboard Mobile App

- Set up your Grade Center and online assignments for any remaining assignments that you would have collected from students in-person. Be sure to assign due dates when creating your assignments.

- Remember, in addition to a numeric score and written feedback, you can even give your students video or audio feedback from the Grade Center.

- If needed, create online quizzes or tests. Blackboard includes 15 question types, including multiple choice, true/false, matching fill-in-the-blank and short answer/essay.
    - When determining the length of time for your online assessment, consider 60 seconds per multiple choice item. 120 seconds per short answer item. 10-15 minutes per essay question.
    - Use the randomization function to curb cheating. If you choose to randomize answers, consider not using answers such as 'all the above,' 'both a and b are true,' etc. The randomization will cause these answers to be invalid.
    - In the test setting option, deliver one question at a time versus all-at- once display.
    - Should you need to make test exceptions for individual students (more allotted time, etc). See this page for more information on test exceptions.

- Set-up Discussion Board forums to allow students to debate, synthesize, respond and communicate with their peers. If teaching a large class, assign discussion board forums to small-groups to support the dialogue that would have happened during class.

- Create small groups in Blackboard to provide peer assessments, file sharing and group discussions.

- Require students to participate on the discussion board and in their small groups but also assign points to their online discussion participation.

- Keep students regularly informed with personalized emails and Bb Announcements.

- You can also create video Announcements using Panopto.

- Use Panopto to narrate PowerPoint lectures, review upcoming assignments, prepare for exams...basically whatever you can pull up on your computer screen, you can record and turn it into a video.
    - When making educational videos [follow best practices](#) such as limiting your videos to 5-7 minutes and chunking your content.
- Use Bb Collaborate for virtual office hours, student advising and to support online group work.
- You can also use Bb Collaborate if you are supervising students in the field.
- Be accessible to your students online. Respond to emails in a timely fashion.
- Create a "FAQ frequently asked questions" discussion board forum and encourage students to post and respond to each other on this forum.
- Remind students to review the [eLearning help pages](#) for technical assistance.

For more help documentation, refer to the [GVSU Teaching with Technology website](#) for other technology resources. You are also encouraged to contact the [eLearning team](#) with questions and to schedule individual consultations as you convert your course to the online format.