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1. Accessing the CE6 Blackboard System

Getting your computer ready for Blackboard

Supported internet browsers
GMU supports the following browsers. Click on the links below to download them.

- Internet Explorer 7
- Mozilla Firefox 2

To find out what version of Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox you have:

1. Open your browser.
2. Click on Help
3. Click on About Internet Explorer, or About Mozilla Firefox.
4. You will see the version in the pop-up window.

Java
Blackboard will only work correctly if you have the latest version of Java installed.

To see if your browser has the Java plug in:

   - You have if you see the animated icon and the wording, “Congratulations. The latest version of the JRE is installed and running correctly on your system.”
   - If you do not have Java or need to update, you will need to navigate to http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp and install it.
Pop-up windows
Make sure your browser allows pop-up:

1. Click OK to continue.
2. Click on the yellow information bar that says a pop-up has been blocked at the top of your browser window (in Firefox it will have an options button to click)
3. Choose to temporarily or permanently pop-ups from GMU.blackboard.com
Trusted Web sites
Add Blackboard to your browser's list of trusted web sites.

If you are using Internet Explorer 7:
1. Click on **Tools**
2. Select **Pop-up Blocker**
3. Click on **Pop-up Blocker Settings**
4. Inside the text box, type: `GMU.blackboard.com`
5. Click **add**

If you are using Firefox 2:
1. Click **Tools**
2. Click **Options**
3. Click the **Content** tab
4. Click **Exceptions** to the right of the **Block Pop-Up Windows** check box
5. Inside the text box, type: `GMU.blackboard.com`, and then click **add**

**Note:**
You must accept all certificates, allow all pop-ups, and trust all content in order to successfully access the content.
Accessing Blackboard

Login


Note: You will be re-directed to http://gmu.blackboard.com

2. Enter your username and password into the text fields.

Note: Usernames and Passwords
- Your username is the first part of your GMU e-mail address, before the @ sign.
- Example: If your GMU e-mail address is jsmith7@gmu.edu, your username will be just jsmith7.
- Your password is the same password that you use for your GMU e-mail account.
- If you have forgotten your password, visit http://mail.gmu.edu, and click I forgot my password.

Security
Allow Blackboard to get through your browser's security screens. You may get one or more of these pop-up warnings when you log in:

- Your actual log in will be done on a secure page that starts with https://....
- Once you've logged in, you will no longer be on a secure web connection.

Note: These are all normal when you log in to Blackboard. You must allow all pop-ups, or your browser security will prevent you from logging in to Blackboard.

Password
If you need to change the password to access Blackboard, you will need to reset your Mason e-mail password:

- Point your browser to http://mail.gmu.edu.
- Log in to your e-mail account.
- Click the Options tab.
1. Click the Password box on the left panel.
2. Enter your old password
3. Enter your new password
4. Re-type your new password
5. Click **Change Password** to finish making changes
6. Or, Click **Reset** to retain old password
2. Understanding the My Blackboard Page

The My Blackboard page is the first and main screen you see after logging into Blackboard. This page provides a single point of access to all courses you are enrolled in.

**Personalizing and Adjusting your Settings**

My Settings allows users to modify and adjust the current functional and display settings on My Blackboard page.

Forward Blackboard e-mail to your GMU e-mail account:

1. Click the My Settings link on the top right side of your Blackboard page.
2. Click the My Tools Options link (the 2nd of 3 tabs on the settings page).
3. Scroll down the page to the Mail section.
4. Select the checkbox next to the Mail Forwarding / Forward all mail messages to the e-mail address in my profile text.
5. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click the Save button to save your changes.
Setting your Who’s Online status:

1. Click the **My Settings** link on the top right side of your blackboard page.
2. Click the **My Tools** options link (the 2nd of 3 tabs on the settings page).
3. Scroll down to the bottom of the page to the **Who’s Online** section.
4. Click the input box to change your status from Visible/Available, Visible/Unavailable or Invisible.
   - **Visible/Available**: allows other users to see you on Blackboard and also let them know you are available for instant message
   - **Visible/Unavailable**: allows other users to see you on Blackboard but tells them that you are unavailable for instant message
   - **Invisible**: other users are unable to tell whether or not you are on Blackboard
5. Click the **Save** button to save your changes.

Setting up your Calendar:

1. On the **My Blackboard** page, select the arrow icon to the right of the **Calendar Day** channel.
2. When the sub-navigation menu is presented, select the **Edit Calendar Day** link.

Adding Events to your Calendar:

1. On the Calendar Options page, click the **Add Entry** button.
2. In the **Title** textbox, add a title to your event
3. In the **Description** text field, add a description to your event
4. Select the **starting date** for the event by either clicking the calendar icon or typing it in manually
5. Select the **starting time** for the event by either clicking the time icon or typing it in manually
6. Select the **end date** for the event by either clicking the calendar icon or typing it in manually
7. Select the **end time** for the event by either clicking the time icon or typing it in manually
8. Click the **Save** button to save your changes.
Creating reoccurring events with Blackboard calendar:
1. After setting up your event, select the arrow icon to the left of the More Options text.
2. Select the box next to the text This Entry Repeats.
3. Select Every Day or Every Week on These Days.
4. Select the end date for the event by either clicking the calendar icon or typing it in manually.
5. Attach a web URL if appropriate.
6. Click the Save button to save your changes.

Note
Instructors may add dates to your calendar.

Forwarding your Blackboard E-mail:
To manually forward your mail from Blackboard (BB) to another e-mail account:
1. Click on the Mail icon on the top right side of your blackboard page.
2. Select from which course you would like to forward e-mail.
3. Once course is selected, select the course e-mail that you wish to forward.
4. Click Forward and enter in or search for the e-mail recipient.
Moving channels and getting them back if hidden:

- To move channels from one location on the screen to another:
  1. Click on Layout on the top right side of your blackboard page
  2. Select which column item (from A, B or C) you would like to move to another column.
  3. Click a directional arrow to move a channel selection (i.e. Course List from Column B to Column A, click on the left arrow on the ‘Move’ box).
  4. Click Save.
• **Hiding channels:** To hide or reveal channels:
  1. Click on **Channels** on the top right side of your blackboard page
  2. Select or deselect channels based on your display preferences on the My Blackboard main page.
  3. Click **Save**.

**Entering your course from your My Blackboard page:**

1. While attempting to enter a course, you may receive an error message indicating that the course is not available.
2. If you receive this message, contact your instructor to ensure the course if available or for technical assistance, call the IT help desk at 703/993-8870 or e-mail GMU course administration at [http://courses@Gmu.edu](http://courses@Gmu.edu).

**Note:**
If a course is listed under the Course List but it cannot be selected or content is not available, contact your instructor.
3. Locating Course Tools

Once you log in to Blackboard, select the course you are enrolled in under **Course List**. On the left side of the course home page, is the **Course Tools** menu. Click the menu bar, to expand or collapse the menu.

**Note:**
When you move the cursor over an icon, the name of the menu item will appear.

### Expanding and Collapsing the Course Tools Menu

To hide the **Course Tools**, click the arrow located to the left of **Course Tools**. This also works for hiding **My Tools**.
Course Tools

You will only be able to see the tools that the professor/instructor has chosen to use for your particular course.
1. The drop-down arrows next to the icons/menu items (i.e., Course Content), indicates that the category is expandable
2. Once you select the arrows you will be able to view the drop down list that is under Course Content.
3. The star next to an icon/menu item indicates that a new item has been posted.

Clicking Icons
The icons are located under the Course Tools tab on the left side of the page – the icons may also appear on the main page.

Working with Course Tools

Course Content – Here you will find an overview of course documents.
Announcements – Here you will find course-related announcements.
Assessments – Here you will find surveys or quizzes that need to be taken, if applicable.
Assignments – Here you will find course work that needs to be completed.
Calendar – Here you will find a calendar that you can switch to a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly view.
Chat – Here you will be able to chat with your classmates and instructor/professor.
Discussions – Here you will be able to participate in class discussions.
**Mail** – Here you will be able to send and receive messages to your classmates and instructor/professor.

**Media Library** – Here you will find course-related media resources (e.g., video clips).

**Search** – Here you will be able to search for files in Blackboard (e.g., a search engine).

**Syllabus** – Here you can view the syllabus for the course you selected when you logged in. If you are enrolled in more than one course, go back to My Blackboard and select another course.

**Web Links** – Here you will find links related to your course.

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**Working with My Tools**

**My Grades** – Here you will find your grades. Check with your instructor/professor if you do not see your grades posted.

**My Files** – Here you will be able to upload and download files, create files, get files, create folders, or create HTML pages

**Downloading a File**

1. Click on **My Files**.
2. Click on the file folder icon that contains the file(s) you need to download.
3. Click on **Get Files**.
4. Click on the file that you need to download.
5. Click **Open** or **Save** to start the downloading process.

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**Note:**

Click **Save** to store the file on your hard drive or storage device. Click **Open**, to access the file from its present location. You can also save the file to a storage device after you open it.
How to Deal with the Pop-up Blocker in Internet Explorer

If a “pop-up blocked” message appears, click the “pop-up blocked” bar at the top of the page and follow the directions to allow the file to download.

Uploading a File

1. Click on My Files (under My Tools).
2. Click on Get Files.
3. Click on My Computer.
4. Click on the file you need to upload from the place it is located on your hard drive / storage device and click Open.

Note:
Your file will appear where you directed the file to be stored in Blackboard. (e.g., My Files > Chat Whiteboard Folder > file name).
Breadcrumbs Trail

The **breadcrumb trail** is the file path that lets you know where you are currently located in Blackboard. Click the links to go to a previous page.

### Checking Your Grades

To check your grades, click **My Grades (Under My Tools)**. Your grades will be posted next to the name of the assignment.

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**Note:**

Not all the instructors post the grades on Blackboard. Contact your instructor if you do not see your grades.
4. Assignments

Submitting an assignment
To access the assignments page, under Course Tools, click Assignments.

- The Inbox tab lists assignments that are due.
- TheSubmitted tab lists assignments that have been submitted, but not yet graded.
- TheGraded tab lists assignments that have been graded and returned.
- The Published tab lists assignments that have been published for the class to view.

To submit an assignment:
1. On the Inbox tab, click the name of the assignment.
2. Review any instructions the professor may have posted.
3. Download any attachments from the instructor, listed directly below the instructions, by clicking the title of the file.
4. Under the Submission box, click Add Attachments.
   a. If the file has previously been uploaded to Blackboard, under My Files, select the assignment and click OK.
   b. If the file is located on your computer, click My Computer. In the Open box, navigate to the file and click Open.
5. Attach multiple files as necessary. The attached files are listed under the Submission box. To delete a file, click the Remove icon next to the file name.

6. In the Add Comment box, enter any comments regarding the assignment.
7. Click Submit.
8. On the confirmation message that appears, click OK.
9. A confirmation page appears with the date and time you submitted the assignment. Click OK.
10. The assignment is removed from the Inbox tab and is now listed on the Submitted tab.
Submitting a Web site

If the assignment is a Web site, you must attach it as a zip file and set a start page before submitting it.

To set a start page:
1. Once you attach the zip file containing the site, click Set Start Page.
2. Select the start page file, and click Select.
3. Click Preview to verify the page is correct.

Note:
Make sure your zip file contains an .html file when you are uploading a Web site.
Publishing Assignments

To publish a submitted assignment:

1. On the **Submitted** tab, click the **ActionLinks** drop-down arrow next to the assignment.
2. Select **Publish Controls**.
3. Click **Publish**.
4. A copy of the assignment is now listed on the **Published** tab. Anyone with access to the course is able to open and view the assignment.

**Note:**
Not all the instructors allow you to publish your assignments.
5. Discussion boards

The discussion boards are an online forum for students to discuss class topics, collaborate on projects and post comments and files for larger conversations. The discussion board can display all comments and history on a single topic.

Finding your board

1. Open Blackboard
2. Find Discussion on the toolbox on the left

Note: The star indicates you have new discussion content.
Viewing different topics and projects

Mouse over an item, and look for a highlight color in the background.

- To review All Topics, click on All Topics.
- To review All My Posts, click on All My Posts.

Messages

Composing a message

In a pop-up window, view your Message area. It contains the following fields:
Using HTML
Consider the following options:

1. **Enable HTML Creator**: Using a family of tools, format your text. This feature allows you to use icons to affect content: bold, italics, underlines, tables, etc.
   - **> WYSIWYG**: What you see is what you get—a clean view of the HTML content.
   - **> Source View**: How content appears as code, topic.

2. **Use HTML**: Choose if you want to work in formatted text.

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**Note:**
If you have not enabled Java, you will not be able to use this feature.
Replying to a message

1. Open an e-mail
2. Click Reply
3. Complete the Message and Post

Sorting your messages:
Find all the Messages you have posted using View My Posts option.

Sort by date, subject, etc
Sort by the headers in the top row. All discussions in this table will sort by this field.

Read vs Unread:
Sort by the icon in the top row.
Blogs
Instructors can create a collaborative blog by allowing users to post a chronological series of entries on a particular topic.

The instructor can decide about Student Posting Rules:
- Students can post messages and reply to messages
- Students can post messages but cannot reply to messages
- Students can reply to messages but cannot post messages
- Students can edit their messages after posting them
- Lock this topic for Students (Section Instructors can post in a locked topic)

About replies, the instructor can decide how the author is identified:
- Authors are identified by user names
- Authors are anonymous to Students

Journal
Instructors can create a journal topic to for your own writing. The journals can be kept between the student and the instructor (private) or shared with the class (public).
6. Quizzes

A quiz is an online test that Students complete and submit for a grade. The grades are recorded in the Grade Book. Quizzes are used to assess students’ performance in the course.

Accessing a quiz

A STAR appears next to Assessment to indicate that a quiz has been created. If the instructor has set up the calendar, you can see an entry in your calendar too.

**Note**

Assessments will show quizzes, surveys and self-tests:
- Quizzes are online assessments for which grades are assigned.
- Surveys are anonymous online evaluations for which no grades are assigned
- Self tests are assessments for which Students receive grades and feedback, though the grades are not recorded in the Grade Book tool.
Opening a quiz

1. Click on **Assessment**
2. Select the quiz you want to take from the main content.

3. Click on the name of the quiz. The name of the quiz is a link shown in blue and underlined. If you hover on the name, the text **Continue Assessment** is shown.
4. If the instructor has assigned a password, you will need to enter the password to start the quiz.

The quiz page

Once you select the quiz, you are presented with the description of the quiz. The description shows information about:

1. **Availability:** Displays the dates you are allowed to take the test. The quiz will always have a start time but the end time can be unlimited or fixed. If your quiz has an END time, you will still have access to the quiz if you start the quiz before the end time.

2. **Duration:** Displays the allocated time to take the test. The quiz can have:
• Unlimited time
• Fixed time indicated by instructor (e.g. hours, minutes or days)
• If time expires, you might not be able to see the questions because the instructor has disallowed the display of questions.

3. **Question delivery**: Displays information about how questions will be presented. Questions can appear:
   - All at once.
   - One at a time and questions can be revisited.
   - One at a time and questions cannot be revisited.

4. **Attempts**: Displays information about how many opportunities you have to take the test and the number of attempts you have done. Quizzes can have one or more (unlimited) attempts. If the instructor allows you to have several attempts, questions may appear in random order. The instructor can also assign a minimum attempt time.

5. **Grade**: Displays the grade you have obtained according to the number of tests allowed. The grade may appear:
   - After the assessment has been submitted
   - After the assessment has been submitted AND all of the questions have been graded
   - After the availability period has ended
   - After the availability period has ended AND all of the questions have been graded

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**Note**

If your pop-up blocker is on, the quiz will not open.
Reading the details of the quiz

1. Click on Instructions and Troubleshooting to see detailed quiz instructions. These instructions will have information about:
   a. The question display
   b. The allowed time to complete assessment
   c. The grade system
   d. How to begin the assessment
   e. What to do to save the answers and submit the assessment
   f. Details about the information shown on the assessment window (e.g. remaining time, statistics about answered questions and saved questions, etc.)

2. Click on Begin Assessment
Tips

1. Always click **SAVE ANSWER** button to prevent losing work in the event of a technical problem.
2. If questions open in different windows, you can close the window and resume your quiz later, if allowed.
3. Quizzes are only available during the dates defined by the instructor. If the quiz shows up but you cannot click on it, check the START date of the quiz.
7. Technical Support

If you are still having issues after following any of the steps above, and require assistance you can contact the ITU support center (http://itusupport.gmu.edu).

**Phone:** (703) 993-8870  
**E-mail:** support@gmu.edu