



Blackboard: Customizing Your Course

Managing the Course Menu

The Course Menu appears on the left side of a course and contains links to materials and tools within the course. The instructor can customize the appearance of the Course Menu and the content and tools available to users.

1. Select **Control Panel** from the course menu.
2. Click the **Manage Course Menu** link under **Course Options**.

a. Modifying the course menu

- i. Click the **Modify** button to the right of the menu item you want to change. This step shows you the **Update Area** page where you can select a new name for the area.
- ii. **Enter in a new name** for the menu item. Keep menu item names brief (a maximum of 18 characters).
- iii. Click **Submit**. The Receipt: Success page lets you know that the update was successful.
- iv. Click **OK** to return to the **Manage Course Menu** page.

b. Reordering the course menu


- i. Locate the **menu item you want to move** and click the **drop down arrow** by the item.
- ii. **Select the number** based on where you want to place the item. For example, to move your item from the fourth spot to the second, choose 2.

c. Hiding menu items

- i. Locate the **menu item that you want to make unavailable**.
- ii. Click the **Modify** button to the right of the item.
- iii. **Uncheck** the box by **Available for Student/Participant Users**.
- iv. Click **Submit**. The Receipt: Success page lets you know that the update was successful.
- v. Click **OK** to return to the **Manage Course Menu** page.

d. Removing menu items

- i. Find the **unwanted menu item** and click the **Remove** button on the right.
- ii. Click **OK** if you truly want to remove the item. If not, click Cancel.

 **WARNING**— Removing a Content Area item from the course menu deletes all underlying content – you cannot retrieve the content after it's removed.

e. Adding Menu Items

First you will need to determine what type of menu item you want to add.

- ✓ **Content Area:** An empty folder where you can organize your content.
- ✓ **Tool Link:** Functions listed in the Course Tools area of the Control Panel that can be made available to students from the course menu.
- ✓ **Course Link:** An internal connection to a specific area within your Blackboard course.
- ✓ **External Link:** Access to an external web site

i. Adding a Content Area

1. Click on the **Content Area** option in the **Add** bar right above the course menu list. This step takes you to the **Add New Area** page where you can add a new content area to your Blackboard course.



2. **Select a name** for the menu item from the pull-down menu or type one of your choosing in the space below the drop-down menu list. Remember to keep names short – 18 or fewer characters.



If you attempt to use a name that is already being used in your course menu, you'll get the following message: *Action Unsuccessful, The attempted action was not successful. The label is already in use....Choose another label.*

3. Leave the **Allow Guest access** and **Allow Observer access** checkboxes **UNCHECKED**. We do not use the Guest or Observer roles @ UNCG. By default, the Available for Student/Participant users is checked. Uncheck this box if you are not yet ready for students to see this menu item.
4. Click **Submit**. The Receipt: Success page lets you know that the addition was successful.
5. Click **OK** to return to the **Manage Course Menu** page. Notice that your new item has been added to the bottom of the list. Reorder as you see fit.

ii. Adding a Tool Link

1. In the **Add** bar, click on the **Tool Link** option. The **Add New Area** page appears and lists the tools that are available in Blackboard.
2. Click the **drop-down** menu to see the list of **tool types**.
3. Click to **select the tool** type you want to add to your course menu.
4. Keep the given name (if applicable) or **enter in a name** of your choosing in the **Name field**.

5. Leave the **Allow Guest access** and **Allow Observer access** checkboxes **UNCHECKED**. (you will see these boxes depending on the type of tool you have added) We do not use the Guest or Observer roles @ UNCG. By default, the Available for Student/Participant users is checked. Uncheck this box if you are not yet ready for students to see this menu item.
6. Click **Submit**. The Receipt: Success page lets you know that the addition was successful.
7. Click **OK** to return to the **Manage Course Menu** page. Notice that your new item has been added to the bottom of the list. Reorder as you see fit.

iii. Adding a Course Link

1. In the **Add** bar, click on the **Course Link** option.
2. **Enter in a name** for the menu item in the **Name field**.
3. Click the **Browse** button to locate within your Blackboard course the object (Content Area, tool or content item, for example) to which this menu item will send students. The course map will appear in a separate window.
4. Click the **title of the item you want to link to**. The course map window will close once you've made your selection.
5. Leave the **Allow Guest access** and **Allow Observer access** checkboxes **UNCHECKED**. We do not use the Guest or Observer roles @ UNCG. By default, the Available for Student/Participant users is checked. Uncheck this box if you are not yet ready for students to see this menu item.
6. Click **Submit**. The Receipt: Success page lets you know that the addition was successful.
7. Click **OK** to return to the **Manage Course Menu** page. Notice that your new item has been added to the bottom of the list. Reorder as you see fit.

iv. Adding an External Link

1. In the **Add** bar, click the **External Link** option.
2. **Enter in a name** for this menu item in the **Name field**.



This step is especially important if the web address does not clearly designate what the site it about. For example, if you simply type www.bbb.com, your students might not realize that the web address refers to the Better Business Bureau.

3. **Type the complete URL** (web address). Be sure to enter the URL starting with *http://*.
4. Check the box by **Open in a new window** if you would like the link to open in a separate browser window when a student clicks the link.



Have the external link open in a separate window in case students want to refer to the site off and on while they're using the Blackboard course.

5. Leave the **Allow Guest access** and **Allow Observer access** checkboxes **UNCHECKED**. We do not use the Guest or Observer roles @ UNCG. By default, the Available for Student/Participant users is checked. Uncheck this box if you are not yet ready for students to see this menu item.
6. Click **Submit**. The Receipt: Success page lets you know that the addition was successful.
7. Click **OK** to return to the **Manage Course Menu** page. Notice that your new item has been added to the bottom of the list. Reorder as you see fit.

Course Menu Display Options

Two views may be made available to users; if both views are available, users may toggle between them.

- ✓ **Quick View:** *Displays top-level of course materials. Menu Items may be displayed as buttons or text.*
- ✓ **Detail View:** *Displays course materials as seen in the Course Map. This view expands to show the hierarchy of course navigation.*

To specify a view:

1. Select **Course Design** in the Control Panel under **Course Options**.
2. Click **Manage Menu Display Options**.
3. Select the radio button by **Detail View** or **Quick View**. Check the box by **Allow use of both views** to allow students to select the view they prefer. By default, Quick View is selected.
4. Click **Submit**. The next screen that appears will confirm the update.
5. Click **OK** to return to the **Course Design** page.

Course Menu Design

If you choose to use the Quick View menu display option, then the menu items may be displayed as buttons or text.

To specify the menu style and properties:

1. Select **Course Design** in the Control Panel under **Course Options**.
2. Click **Course Menu Design**.

3. Select either the **Buttons** or **Text** radio button, depending on how you want the menu items to appear on the course menu.
 - a. **Selecting Buttons**

You can choose from different properties for each style.

Button Type: Solid colors, patterns, or striped

Button Shape: Rounded corners, rounded ends, or rectangular

Button Style: Select from various patterns, colors or stripe combinations
 - b. **Selecting Text**

You can select the background color for the menu and the text color.
4. Once you made your selections, click **Submit**. The next screen that appears will confirm the update.
5. Click **OK** to return to the **Course Design** page.

Course Banner

Consider making your course more inviting by adding a course banner. You'll create the graphic outside of Blackboard using a program like Adobe Photoshop or MS Paint.

Once you've created an image for your banner:

1. Select **Course Design** in the Control Panel under **Course Options**.
2. Click **Course Banner**. The Course Banner page appears, allowing you to upload an image from your computer.
3. Click the **Browse** button. This step opens a dialog box that allows you to navigate to the file location on your computer and choose the file.



A check box is also available on the page which allows you to remove the existing banner. To remove an existing banner, click the **Remove this banner** check box and click **Submit**.

4. Click **Submit**. The next screen that appears will confirm the update.
5. Click **OK** to return to the **Course Design** page.