

HUNTER COLLEGE BLACKBOARD (Bb) USE POLICIES

Version: 15 Feb 2010

Note: *This document was developed by the “Blackboard Policy Advisory Committee (BPAC)” over the course of the spring and fall semesters 2009.*

This document contains references to help documents which may provide necessary context to fully understand the policies stated here. These help documents are for information only, they are not part of the actual policies and they may change in response to user needs and suggestions. We are still working on some additional guidance documents dealing with copyright, high stakes testing, and accessibility and will add specific references as these documents become available.

For better legibility, only a limited numbers of URLs are shown in clear text; a link to an electronic version of the Bb Use Policies can be found on the [Bb Information page \(http://bb.hunter.cuny.edu\)](http://bb.hunter.cuny.edu) along with other Bb related information.

Current BPAC members: Jack Caravanos (Health Sciences), Daniel Chess (Mathematics), Roberta Kilkenny (AFPRL) , Brian Lym (Library), Mark Miller (English), Donna Nickitas (Nursing), George Patterson (Social Work), John Toth (Education), Ted Ryo (GSA), Aleksandr Akulov (USG). *Earlier members:* Elizabeth Danto (Social Work), Devra Golbe (Economics), Ryan Flanery (GSA), Gary Schmidgall (English). The committee is co-chaired by Gina [Cherry](#) (ICIT) and Manfred [Kuechler](#) (Provost's Office).

PREAMBLE

These policies are intended to provide the Hunter community with a set of consistent Blackboard practices. Since Hunter's Blackboard system is maintained by CUNY/CIS, Hunter has limited control over certain policy decisions. This document reflects both CUNY policy and policy created locally by Hunter's Blackboard Policy Advisory Committee (BPAC).

These policies are not intended to supersede existing academic policy. For questions regarding issues such as student registration and access to courses, grading policies, and record retention, please refer to Hunter College and CUNY academic policies and procedures.

A. BLACKBOARD ACCOUNTS

WHO CAN USE BLACKBOARD?

Blackboard accounts are available to all current CUNY faculty, students, and staff with a CUNY Portal account, with the exception of those affiliated with some special programs such as Continuing Education and IELI.

PORTAL USER NAME/PASSWORD

A CUNY Portal ID and password is required to use Blackboard. The Portal account must have the role of faculty, student, or staff in order to gain full access to Bb.

EMAIL ADDRESSES

Email addresses are automatically brought into Blackboard from other CUNY systems. In most cases, the Blackboard email address will be the user's Hunter email address. Users have the option to change the email address used by Bb internally to any CUNY email address.

ACCOUNTS FOR NON-CUNY USERS

A "visitor" account on the CUNY Portal does not provide access to the Blackboard system. People outside of CUNY who have an ongoing affiliation with Hunter courses (e.g., field placement supervisors) may apply for a Blackboard account by filling out a "green screen" form, available at <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/icit/help/eforms>. These accounts require approval by the department chair and the Hunter CIO. Blackboard accounts are necessary only when a non-CUNY user requires full participation in a course – e.g., access to the discussion board or to the course control panel. Other options, such as "guest access," are available for granting non-CUNY users more limited access to courses (see section on Guest Access).

TEST STUDENT ACCOUNTS

A shared test student account is available for instructors who would like to view their courses from the student perspective. Instructors can enroll the test student in their courses and are responsible for making the course "unavailable" to the test student when testing is completed to avoid unintended access by other instructors.

B. BLACKBOARD COURSES**FACULTY/INSTRUCTOR ACCESS TO COURSE SITES**

Blackboard course sites are automatically created for every course prior to the beginning of the semester. Instructors listed as the "instructor of record" in SIMS are automatically added to their Blackboard course sites, usually within 24 - 48 hours after they have been listed in SIMS. Departments or programs are responsible for listing course instructors in SIMS. The online schedule of courses (<http://registrar.hunter.cuny.edu/subpages/searchclass.shtml>) maintained by the registrar reflects the instructor status in SIMS as of the previous day. Instructors who do not appear in the schedule should contact the department or program offering the course.

STUDENT ACCESS TO COURSE SITES

Blackboard course sites are created for all courses listed in SIMS and, by default, all courses are set as "unavailable" to students. Unless Bb use is mandated by a school or department, it is the instructor's decision whether and when to make the Bb course site available to the students. Students who are officially registered for a course and thus are listed in SIMS are automatically added to the course in Blackboard within 24 – 48 hours after enrollment and they will be automatically removed if – for whatever reason – they are no longer listed in the SIMS roster. Instructors can access the SIMS enrollment roster of the previous day via <http://webroster.hunter.cuny.edu> . If discrepancies between the SIMS roster (obtained via webroster) and the Bb roster remain for more than 24 hours, instructors should contact Bb support.

“ENROLLING” STUDENTS

Instructors should not add (“enroll”) regular students to their Blackboard courses without first contacting Blackboard support at bb@hunter.cuny.edu to avoid any misunderstandings about a student’s official enrollment status. The Bb “enroll” feature should be used solely for teaching assistants and other people involved in a course who do not register and will not receive a grade for a course.

REMOVING STUDENTS

Instructors can effectively “remove” a student by making the course “unavailable” to this student; however, students who remain on the official SIMS roster will be automatically reinstated within 24 – 48 hours. If students are incorrectly listed in a Blackboard course, instructors should contact Bb support at bb@hunter.cuny.edu.

ENROLLING ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTORS, TAs, AND COURSE BUILDERS

Additional instructors, TAs, and course builders can be manually added by the instructor.

Note: For information about how to do so and what privileges accompany each role check <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/icit/help-docs/repository/files/pdf-files/AddingInstructorsTAsCourseBuilders.pdf>.

TRANSFERRING COURSE SITES

Additional instructors will not be given access to a course site without written consent from the primary instructor or the department chair. Faculty who wish to access content in a colleague’s site should ask their colleague to enroll them as a co-instructor or as a course builder. In the event that the colleague is not available (e.g., no longer affiliated with Hunter) or if the instructor is a course coordinator, a department chair or program director may ask the Blackboard Administrator (bb@hunter.cuny.edu) to give an instructor access to another instructor’s site. The request must be sent from the Hunter email address of the department chair/program director and should include the course number, section number, semester, and names of all instructors involved. Departments should formulate and clearly communicate their access rules to all faculty (full time and part time) so that instructors are aware of these rules before they start building a course site.

GUEST ACCESS TO COURSES

Enabling guest access to a course allows anyone with a CUNY Blackboard account to access the specific parts of the course site for which guest access has been enabled. Guest access becomes effective only when the guest access setting is turned on for the course as a whole and the course has been made available. Guest access to four sections of new Hunter courses (Getting Started, Announcements, Course Information, and Instructor) is enabled by default. Instructors can choose to disable guest access to any of these sections or to the course as a whole. Instructors can also choose to enable guest access to additional sections of the course, as long as doing so will not result in copyright violations (see section on copyrighted material).

As an alternative, instructors can choose to allow specific Blackboard users to view a course as guests by enrolling them in the course and assigning them the role of “guest.” These guests will be able to view the specific sections of the course for which guest access has been enabled, even if guest access for the course as a whole has not been enabled.

INSTRUCTOR ACCESS TO COURSE SITES AFTER THE SEMESTER HAS CONCLUDED

Blackboard courses remain on the server for one year after the end of the semester in which they were created. This policy is set by CUNY/CIS and cannot be changed by Hunter. Notices about such course site removals will be posted on both the [Bb Information page](#) and the “Hunter Faculty Announcements” box on the Bb home page at least two weeks in advance.

STUDENT ACCESS AFTER THE SEMESTER HAS CONCLUDED

While Blackboard courses remain on the server for one year after the end of the semester in which the course was taught, instructors have the option of making courses unavailable to students at the end of the semester. Students can suppress the listing of courses from previous semesters by editing the “My Courses” module on their Blackboard home page.

COURSE SITE BACKUPS, ARCHIVING, AND RE-USE

All course sites are regularly backed up system wide so that the Bb system can be restored in case of a server failure. Backups of individual current courses, however, are not available to instructors or Hunter Bb support. Full backups of completed courses (“archives”) are eventually made available to Hunter Bb support, typically some time during the following semester. These “archive” files can be used to restore a complete course or the copy relevant parts into a new course site (like the site for the same course in a following semester).

However, to ensure prompt access to materials from a past course, instructors are strongly encouraged to use either the “export” or the “archive” feature to produce backups and store these themselves. Export and archive (.zip) file can be viewed locally by using a utility called “bFree” or they can be (partially) imported into another Bb course site.

If an instructor wants to access materials from a previous course but is not able to supply an export or archive file for the course, Hunter Bb support will try to obtain an archive file, but significant delays may occur.

Instructors who use the Bb Grade Center should download the complete grade center frequently and maintain a local copy of all grades (see section on the Blackboard Grade Center in this document for additional information).

Note: For information about how to perform these tasks check <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/icit/help-docs/blackboard/faculty-docs>

MERGING COURSE SITES

Course sites can be merged using the course merge tool (CMT). As merging course sites combines the course rosters only (but not any content), course sites should be merged prior to adding content.

Instructors have access to CMT and can merge course sections themselves as long as they are a (co-) instructor in all course sites involved. Bb support will perform other mergers (e.g., all sections of a multi-section course) upon request by the department chair/program head. Such requests must be renewed/reconfirmed for each term by either chair or his/her designee.

When multiple course sections are merged enrollments for all sections are combined and shown in a single Blackboard course site (the “target course”). To have a central merged course site in addition to individual course sites for each section, Bb support will create a “master course” upon request; additional time is needed for such new course creations.

Note: For additional information about merging courses check <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/icit/help-docs/blackboard/faculty-docs>

FILE SIZE AND COURSE SIZE LIMITS

Currently, files uploaded to Blackboard cannot be larger than 25 Mb. CUNY may decide to impose a lower limit in the future. In the interest of fast access to course materials, instructors are strongly encouraged to minimize file size with scanning documents or producing video/audio files. However, even when using efficient compression methods, video and audio files may be quite large and other storage options are available and should be considered. Contact the Teaching Resource Center (TRC) or Bb support for further information.

BLACKBOARD GRADE CENTER

CUNY policy requires that you keep a record of student grades for two years after the course has ended (<http://policy.cuny.edu/text/toc/rrs/Instruction>). If you use Blackboard's Grade Center to record student grades, we strongly recommend downloading the grade data to your local computer frequently over the course of the semester and retaining a local copy of the final Grade Center data. Instructions for downloading Grade Center data can be found in our document "[Download and Upload Grades](#)".

ONLINE QUIZZES AND TESTS

Faculty should ensure that they retain copies of Blackboard exam questions and answers for one year after the course ends, in accordance with CUNY record retention policy: <http://policy.cuny.edu/text/toc/rrs/Instruction>. Faculty who wish to use Blackboard's test tool for high stakes exams are strongly advised to consult with an educational technologist before administering the exam.

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

Materials placed on the Blackboard server by instructors and students should be in compliance with copyright law such as the Teach Act and Fair Use. Guidelines for working with copyrighted material can be found on the Hunter Library web site: <http://library.hunter.cuny.edu/copyright.htm> .

Materials made available on Blackboard are for course use only, and should not be disseminated to people outside the course. Instructors are encouraged to provide students with specific guidelines about appropriate/inappropriate uses of course materials.

[Additional information](#)

ACCESSIBILITY

Faculty are strongly encouraged to make their Blackboard sites and uploaded content (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, video, audio) accessible to people with disabilities, who may use assistive devices such as screen readers. To make Blackboard sites accessible, faculty should consider following guidelines for universal design, which includes elements such as alternative text for images, transcripts for audio, and subtitles for video.

[Additional information](#)

RETENTION OF STUDENT WORK

Instructors are responsible for retaining student work submitted to Blackboard in accordance with CUNY guidelines: <http://policy.cuny.edu/text/toc/rrs/Instruction> . Blackboard course sites remain on the server for one year after the end of the semester in which they are taught, giving instructors full access to student work during this period of time. Courses that are removed from the Blackboard server are archived by CIS and can be retrieved, if necessary, with advance notice (see "Course Site Backups, Archiving, and Re-Use" in this document).

C. BLACKBOARD ORGANIZATIONS**REQUESTING AN ORGANIZATION**

Hunter faculty and staff may request a Blackboard site for college-related purposes other than official courses ("Bb Organizations"). Bb organizations for departmental programs and functions must be requested by the department chair or program head. Requests can be made by emailing bb@hunter.cuny.edu with the following information: organization name, name(s) and email address(es) of leader(s), type of enrollment (adding "participants") desired.

Note: Additional information about Bb organizations (aka communities) is available via <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/icit/help-docs/blackboard/faculty-docs>.

BATCH ENROLLMENTS

Batch enrollment, in which participants are enrolled by Bb support based on a data file extracted from SIMS, can be used for large departmental organizations (e.g., all psychology majors) as long as all information defining membership is contained in SIMS. The department chair or program officer should email requests for batch enrollments to bb@hunter.cuny.edu from his/her Hunter e-mail account. Batch enrollments can take up to one week to process. Requesters will be notified by email when the process is complete. Batch enrollments will be updated upon request, up to once per semester. Organization leaders are responsible for day-to-day maintenance of user enrollments.

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