

# Online Learning Blackboard Guide

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## Internet and Browser Requirements

In order to take an online course, you will need a computer with an Internet connection. **For best overall results with Blackboard, you should use Internet Explorer 6 or 7, Firefox 2, or Safari 1.2 or 2.**

**Users of AOL or Other Custom Browsers** - Some Internet Services Providers such as AOL provide their own customized browser for surfing the Web. People who use these services may have problems submitting items in Blackboard. If you use AOL or another ISP with a custom browser, we recommend the following:

1. Start AOL to connect to the Internet.
2. Minimize the AOL window.
3. Start up Internet Explorer.
4. Log on to Blackboard.

**Visual Text Editor** – You should be able to submit discussion messages or other items with any of the supported browsers listed above. However, if you have a Windows PC and a recent version of Internet Explorer or Firefox, you will also see a toolbar that lets you format your text.

**Connection Speed** – Blackboard requires a MINIMUM connection speed of 56K. For best results, higher speeds are recommended, especially if you are taking a course that has a lot of graphics or other rich content. The speed at which your Blackboard course pages load will depend on the amount of traffic on the Internet as well as the type of connection you have. (For example, dialing up with a 56K modem will be much slower than using DSL or cable modem.)

## Your Student ID number

You will need to know your NCC Student ID number in order to log into Blackboard. This number appears at the top of the student data sheet that you get when you register for your classes. **If you cannot locate this number, please contact the Records Office for assistance.** Note that the Support Center cannot give you your ID number unless you stop by in person with a photo ID.

**Note:** Do not share your NCC student ID with anyone else. Also, be sure to change your password after logging in as described below.

## Logging In

Most online courses at NCC are delivered through a program called Blackboard. To log in and access your course:

1. Go to the NCC Blackboard website: <http://northampton.blackboard.com>  
(You can also get to this page from the NCC home page: <http://www.northampton.edu/>.  
Click on **Logins**, then on **Blackboard/Online Learning**.)

2. Click on the **Login** button.
3. Enter your username. Your user name is your **NCC student ID**.
4. Enter your password. (Your initial password is your NCC student ID, NOT your Spartan Net web password.)
5. Click on the **Login** button.



Click on the following links to see the video tutorials:

[http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb\\_student\\_videos/logging\\_into\\_bb1/logging\\_into\\_bb1.htm](http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb_student_videos/logging_into_bb1/logging_into_bb1.htm)

[http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb\\_student\\_videos/logging\\_into\\_bb2/logging\\_into\\_bb2.htm](http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb_student_videos/logging_into_bb2/logging_into_bb2.htm)

## The Blackboard Welcome Page

After logging into Blackboard, you will see the Welcome Page.

- The **Tools** section on the left side lets you change your password, e-mail address and other personal information. You can also check your grades from here.
- The **Announcements** section in the middle lets you see course announcements.
- The **My Courses** section on the right side of the screen lists all your courses.

## Changing Your Password

It is strongly recommended that you change your password as soon as you log into Blackboard. To change your password:

1. From the Welcome Page, click on the **Personal Information** link on the left side of the screen.
2. Click on **Change Password**.
3. Type your NEW password in the Password box.
4. Type your new password again in the Verify Password box.

5. Click on the **Submit** button.



Click on the following link to see the video tutorial:

[http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb\\_student\\_videos/change\\_password/change\\_password.htm](http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb_student_videos/change_password/change_password.htm)

## Changing Your E-mail Address and Other Information

When you first register for classes at NCC, you are assigned an NCC e-mail account. NCC instructors and other college staff will use this e-mail address to contact you. Also, this e-mail address is entered into the Blackboard database when your Blackboard logon is created.

**It is highly recommended that you use your NCC student e-mail account for all correspondence related to your online course.** It is possible to forward your NCC e-mail to another address by selecting "Forwarding" from the list of Account Options on the upper right corner of your Student Webmail screen. However, for best results in an online course, you should send messages to your instructor directly from your NCC e-mail account. Otherwise, it will be more difficult to troubleshoot if you encounter any problems.

You can verify your e-mail address and other personal information in Blackboard by following the steps below.

1. Click on the **Personal Information** link in the **Tools** box on the left.
2. Click on **Edit Personal Information**.
3. Enter your e-mail address if necessary. You may only enter ONE e-mail address.
4. Enter your home address, phone number(s) and other contact information.
5. Click on the **Submit** button at the bottom of the page.
6. Click on the **OK** button to return to the Personal Information page.
7. Select **Change Password** to change your password if you have not already done so.

**NOTE:** Be sure to verify your personal information and change when necessary. Note that changing this information in Blackboard does not change it anywhere else or trigger a notice to anyone. Be sure to notify your instructor and the Records office of any changes in your e-mail address or other personal information.



Click on the following link to see the video tutorial:

[http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb\\_student\\_videos/grades\\_personal\\_info/grades\\_personal\\_info.htm](http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb_student_videos/grades_personal_info/grades_personal_info.htm)

## Accessing Your Course(s)

All of your online courses are listed on the right side of the Welcome Page under the heading "My Courses." They are also listed on the second tab of the Welcome Page (called "Courses"). You might find it easier to access your courses from the "My Courses" page.

1. Click on the **course name** (not on an announcement title).
2. The course opens on the **Announcements Page**. Be sure to read all announcements. You may need to scroll down to see all of them.
3. Click on the **Course Information** button or link on the left side of the screen. You will need to read these instructions to find out how to succeed in this course.
4. Click on the **Assignments** button or link. The Assignments page displays folders for each class and due dates for each session's assignments.
5. Click on a class folder to see the activities and assignments you will need to complete for that session.



Click on the following links to see the video tutorials:

[http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearn/docs/Bb\\_student\\_videos/course\\_introduction/course\\_introduction.htm](http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearn/docs/Bb_student_videos/course_introduction/course_introduction.htm)

[http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearn/docs/Bb\\_student\\_videos/access\\_course/access\\_course.htm](http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearn/docs/Bb_student_videos/access_course/access_course.htm)

## Contacting Your Instructor

Click on the **Staff Information** button or link on the left side of your screen for information about contacting your instructor. Be sure to keep in contact with your instructor throughout the semester, especially if you have questions about your assignments or course requirements.

## Getting Help

If you have questions about the content of the course (for example, if you're not sure what's required in an assignment), contact your instructor. See the Staff Information page of your course to see the contact information for your instructor.

If you have technical problems with Blackboard, (for example, if you lost your password or cannot access your course), contact:

NCC Support Center • 610-861-5413 • [Helpdesk@northampton.edu](mailto:Helpdesk@northampton.edu)

To verify Support Center hours, go to

<http://www.northampton.edu/office/compservices/support.htm>

When calling the Support Center, please provide your student ID number and the course code and section. Please be as specific as possible when describing your problem. For example, if you are unable to submit a quiz, identify the exact name of the quiz and where in the course it appears.

## Course Organization and Content

There will be differences between courses designed by different professors, but nearly all of Northampton's Blackboard courses contain the following pages. Each page has a corresponding button or link on the left side of the screen.

- **Announcements** – Your instructor will use this page to notify you about important developments in the course. The Blackboard System Administrator may also post occasional announcements that apply to all online students. Please be sure to log into your course regularly to check for announcements. If there are two or more announcements, some of them may not be immediately visible. Please scroll down the page to see these announcements.
- **Course Information** - Contains important introductory information you should read before beginning the course. Be sure to read through all information in this area; it will help you successfully complete the course.
- **Staff Information** - Contains contact information that you will need to interact with your professor.
- **Course Documents** - May contain handouts or other supplementary materials from your instructor. Also includes Blackboard guides.
- **Assignments** – Contains assignments and due dates. See below for details.
- **Books** - Lists required and optional course materials such as textbooks, study guides, lab manuals, lab materials, CD-ROMs, etc.
- **Discussion Board** - Allows you to conduct online discussions. See below for details.
- **Communications** - Contains links for e-mail, discussion forums (see below), and the Roster, which lists the names of your fellow classmates. Depending on the course, it may also contain collaboration tools such as a chat room or a virtual classroom.
- **External Links** - Contains a collection of useful links to be used in your online studies.
- **Tools** - See below for details.



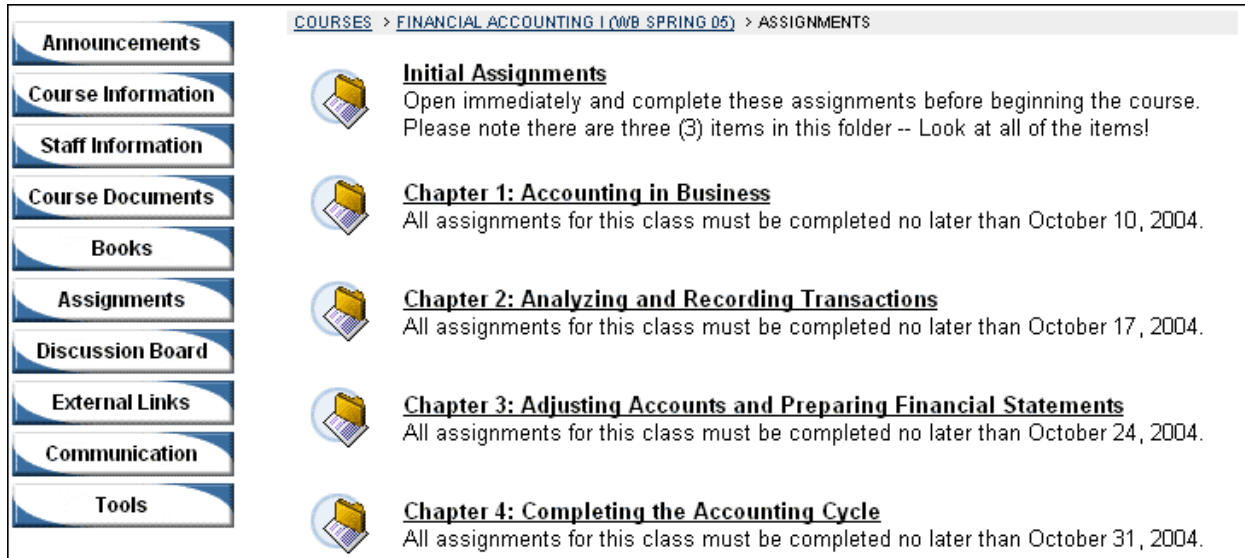
Click on the following links to see the video tutorials:

[http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb\\_student\\_videos/course\\_layout/course\\_layout.htm](http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb_student_videos/course_layout/course_layout.htm)

[http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb\\_student\\_videos/tools\\_and\\_links/tools\\_and\\_links.htm](http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb_student_videos/tools_and_links/tools_and_links.htm)

## Assignments Page

The **Assignments** page, shown below, is the heart of any online course. Here you will find folders that contain the assignments you must complete to successfully finish the course. To access the content for each week, click on the underlined folder name. For instance, to access the assignments for class one in the course illustrated below, click on the underlined class title, “**Chapter 1: Accounting in Business.**”



The screenshot shows a Blackboard course page for 'FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING I (W/B SPRING 05)'. On the left is a navigation menu with links: Announcements, Course Information, Staff Information, Course Documents, Books, Assignments, Discussion Board, External Links, Communication, and Tools. The main content area is titled 'ASSIGNMENTS' and lists four folders, each with a folder icon and a document icon:

- Initial Assignments**: Open immediately and complete these assignments before beginning the course. Please note there are three (3) items in this folder -- Look at all of the items!
- Chapter 1: Accounting in Business**: All assignments for this class must be completed no later than October 10, 2004.
- Chapter 2: Analyzing and Recording Transactions**: All assignments for this class must be completed no later than October 17, 2004.
- Chapter 3: Adjusting Accounts and Preparing Financial Statements**: All assignments for this class must be completed no later than October 24, 2004.
- Chapter 4: Completing the Accounting Cycle**: All assignments for this class must be completed no later than October 31, 2004.

## Sample Assignments Page

### Tools Page

The **Tools** page contains useful course management and “housekeeping” tools. The following tools are contained in nearly all NCC Blackboard courses:

- The **Personal Information** link allows you to edit your personal information and change your password. (Be sure your e-mail address has been correctly entered.)
- The **My Grades** link allows you to check your scores for the graded assignments in your course. (See below for more information.)
- The **On-line Manual** can help you understand the features and functionality of Blackboard.
- The **Digital Drop Box** gives you the ability to upload files to your instructors. Do not use this unless the instructor has specifically asked you to use this tool.

## **Discussion Board**

The Discussion Board is an important means of communication in an online course. You will post messages and reply to other messages as part of certain class assignments. You can also use the discussion board to ask questions about the class. Participation in the discussion board is required in online courses and will count toward your final grade. Students can view each others' messages and respond to them. Unlike a chat room, participants do not have to be online at the same time for a discussion board.

### **Replying to a Discussion Forum Message**

1. Click on the **Discussion Board** button (at left).
2. All the forums will appear as underlined links. Click on the name of the forum that you want to participate in.
3. Any messages that are already in the forum will be listed with a title, author's name and date. Click on the title to read the message.
4. Each message has a **Reply** button at the bottom of the message. Click on this button to post a reply.
5. Type the text of your message.
6. Click on the **Submit** button to post your message.



Click on the following link to see a video tutorial:

[http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/BB\\_videos/Student\\_Disc\\_Msg.html](http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/BB_videos/Student_Disc_Msg.html)

### **Posting a New Discussion Forum Message**

If your instructor set up the Discussion Forum to allow new threads, you can post new messages (rather than just replying to existing ones) as follows:

1. Go to the applicable Discussion Forum as indicated in steps 1-2 above.
2. Click on the + **Thread** button near the top of the page.
3. Enter the subject and text of your message.
4. Click on the **Submit** button.

If you do not see a + *Thread* button, you can only reply to existing messages. Contact your instructor if you would like to post a message but the + **Thread** button does not appear.

### **Problems Entering Text**

If you are having problems posting a message in the Discussion Board or entering text in any other part of Blackboard, you may need to disable the visual text editor. Take the following steps:

1. If you are in a course, click on the "**Tools**" button on the left side of the screen.  
Or from the Blackboard Welcome page, look in the **Tools** box on the left side of the screen.

2. Click on "**Personal Information.**"
3. Click on "**Set Visual Text Box Editor Options.**"
4. Click on "**Unavailable**" and **Submit.**

## Taking an Online Quiz

Some courses have one or more online quizzes or tests that are administered through Blackboard. If this is the case with your course, a link to the test will appear at the appropriate time. Follow these guidelines for best results:

- Check your browser options to ensure that it is not set to disconnect after several minutes of inactivity. (The location of this setting depends on your browser. For example, in Internet Explorer, it is under Tools > Internet Options > Connections > Settings > Advanced.
- If you are an AOL user, do not use the AOL browser. Minimize AOL after connecting to the Internet and log into Blackboard using Internet Explorer.
- Close all other applications before taking the test.
- Don't open the test until you are ready to take it. In most cases, you won't be able to open the test again.
- Complete the test within the time limit set by your instructor.
- Click on the **Submit** button when you are done. You may need to scroll over to see the button.

## Using ConnectWeb for English Courses

If you are taking English I or II, you will do your course work in Norton ConnectWeb. There is a link to the ConnectWeb login page from your Blackboard course. Please see the following website for more information on using ConnectWeb:

<http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearn/how/NortonManual.htm>

## Checking Your Grade

There are two ways to get your grade book:

- From the **Welcome Page** (when you first log on), click on the **View Grades** link on the left side of the screen, then on the name of the course.
- From within a course, click on the **Tools** button, then on **My Grades.**

The "View Grades" page shows you your scores for the graded assignments. Note that any assessment information at the top of this page only shows your scores for online tests. It does not include scores from other tests or assignments.



Click on the following link to see the video tutorial:

[http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb\\_student\\_videos/grades\\_personal\\_info/grades\\_personal\\_info.htm](http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Bb_student_videos/grades_personal_info/grades_personal_info.htm)

## Viewing Files

Some courses contain links to files. Click on the link to view the file. You will need the appropriate application to view the file. For example, PDF files require Adobe Acrobat Reader (Web links for downloading the required application are available in most courses.)

If you have the correct application to view a file but are having problems viewing it, or if you need to open and edit the file, you may need to save the file to your hard drive for best results. To save the file:

1. Right-click on the file.
2. Choose **Save Target As**.
3. Select the desired folder location, enter a file name, and click on **Save**. (Be sure to remember where you are saving the file.)
4. Locate the saved file and double-click on the file to open it.

## Printing a Blackboard Page

To print a page in your Blackboard course:

1. Right-click on any text on the page.
2. Choose **Print**.

## Completing the Online Learning Survey

An Online Learning Survey is built into each course. Please be sure to take a few moments to complete it. Your input is extremely important to us and will help us build a stronger Online Learning program. The survey is anonymous and is not shared with your instructor until after all grades have been submitted. Depending on the length of the course, the survey is displayed about two weeks before the end of the semester and remains available for one week after the end of the semester. To access the survey, click on the link provided in the "Announcements" page in your Blackboard course during this time period.

## For Further Information

The "External Links" page of your online course contains many links to useful resources. Please check them out. For further information please see the Online Learning website:

<http://www.northampton.edu/Distancelearn>

Also, you can find a concise 2-page guide that gives the steps for the most common Blackboard procedures at the following site:

[http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Blackboard\\_Quick\\_Start\\_Students.pdf](http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearndocs/Blackboard_Quick_Start_Students.pdf)