

## Standard Blackboard Course Shell

### Course Menu and Structure

Arrange in Alphabetical Order

- Announcements
- Assignments
- Contact Information
- Custom Button1 (Optional)
- Custom Button2 (Optional)
- My Grades
- Syllabus and Schedule
- Tools

↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

Delete duplicate and unused menu items.

← Faculty can **add announcements** for their course.

← Faculty will **add content folders** under Assignments.

← Contact Information for some services will be prepopulated. Faculty will **add their own contact information**.

← Faculty can add up to two custom buttons of their choosing, rename them and then **move them to maintain alphabetical order**.

← Faculty will **utilize the Blackboard Grade Center** so that students can see up-to-date grade information under My Grades.

← Faculty will **add their course syllabus and schedule**.

← Faculty will **hide links** for tools they are not utilizing.

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### Additional Explanations and Examples of What to Include – Course Menu

**Announcements:** Announcements are the default entry point in the course. They are a quick and easy way for instructors to communicate with students. When you create an announcement, you can send it as an email if you select the Email Announcement option under Web Announcement Options.

**Assignments:** The primary location for submission of student assignments.

**Contact Information:** Instructors need to add their contact information. Although you have contact information in your syllabus, be sure to include it here as well. In addition, this section includes prepopulated campus contacts. If you are importing a course from a past term, you may need to delete the duplicate contacts.

**Custom Button1 and 2 (Optional):** These can be used to help students access commonly-used content or tools, such as a discussion board, wiki or something very specific to your course. NOTE: The menu needs to maintain alphabetical order – so if you change a button to Wiki, it may need to be moved further down in the course menu.

**Syllabus and Schedule:** A copy of your syllabus and tentative schedule need to be inside this button on the course menu.

# Standard Blackboard Shell FAQ

## What are the changes to the standard Blackboard shell?

This video outlines the changes which have been made. [Changes to Blackboard Shell](https://youtu.be/QeKDEgLMEjc) (5:30 minute video) <https://youtu.be/QeKDEgLMEjc>

## Why were these changes made?

Students said the change would save them time and stress. [Inconsistent Blackboard Course Organization: A Student's Perspective](https://youtu.be/5OBkTSP3iYI) (2:47 minute video). <https://youtu.be/5OBkTSP3iYI>

## Are there videos available to watch if we cannot attend a training session?

Yes, several videos were created which are available on the Faculty Resources website – Blackboard, or you can access them by clicking on the title below:

- [How to Add Custom Buttons](https://youtu.be/jfWIGZOZf-A) (3:30 minute video) (*you can add up to two custom buttons to the standard menu*) <https://youtu.be/jfWIGZOZf-A>
- [How to Copy Individual Items from Old Blackboard Shell to New](https://youtu.be/Y8mLEO_iGe8) (5:30 minute video) [https://youtu.be/Y8mLEO\\_iGe8](https://youtu.be/Y8mLEO_iGe8)
- [Revising Imported or Copied Courses](https://youtu.be/YZ8wK7juOjI) (4:30 minute video) <https://youtu.be/YZ8wK7juOjI>
- [Transferring Multiple Buttons to the Standard Blackboard Shell](https://youtu.be/QA7QdO9RlnY) (4:19 minute video) <https://youtu.be/QA7QdO9RlnY>

## Who will be required to use the standard Blackboard shell?

All faculty who use Blackboard for their courses are required to use the shell.

## Am I required to have two custom buttons?

No. Custom buttons are optional.

## Can I have more than two custom buttons?

No. Additional custom buttons will detract from the goal of providing a consistent Blackboard presence across courses.

## Can I add to the name on one of the pre-established buttons? For example, can I change the **Tools** button to **Tools and Tests**?

No. Adding words to the buttons will detract from the goal of providing a consistent Blackboard presence across courses. We encourage you to add links directly to the content folders in the “Assignments” section of the course instead. Remember that you can copy the same link into multiple content folders to give students quick access to course resources

## References

- Chang, S.L., & Ley, K. (2006). A learning strategy to compensate for cognitive overload in online learning: Learner use of printed online materials. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning*, 5(1), 104-117.
- Shank, P. (2007). *The Online Learning Idea Book – 95 Proven Ways to Enhance Technology – Based and Blended Learning*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Stavredes, T. (2011). *Effective Online Teaching Foundations and Strategies for Student Success*. , San Francisco, CA Josey-Bass.