

# BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER CHECKLIST

This checklist will assist you in customizing your course design, turning off unnecessary tools, making the course available, and initiating communication with your students. The tasks on this checklist will help to ensure that your class is ready for student access.

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## BLACKBOARD COURSE SHELLS

Official course shells are automatically generated for all courses approximately six weeks before the start of a new semester. If you would like a development course shell so that you can start building your course, please fill out the **Development Course Request Form** found in the Faculty & Staff section under Forms on <https://blackboard.fresnostate.edu>. **Note:** You will have to copy your development course shell into your official course once it is created.

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## WORKING WITH FILES IN BLACKBOARD

Blackboard does not fully support use of special characters in file names. When naming files to be uploaded into Blackboard, please **do not** include any special characters such as #, %, & or spaces. **Only use letters, numbers, and underscores.** All files must have a correct extension (.docx, .rtf, .pptx, .pdf, etc.) in order for them to open in Blackboard.

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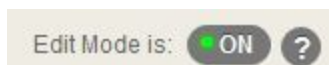
## ACCESSING THE CONTROL PANEL IN YOUR COURSE

To customize your course you will click on the title of your course in the **My Courses** module upon logging into Blackboard.

The **Control Panel**, located directly under the Course Menu, is the area for managing the content, features, users, and appearance of a course. The Control Panel provides access to all the course-building tools. You can expand and collapse items in the Control Panel by clicking on any of the menu buttons.



## EDIT MODE



The Edit Mode toggle allows a user to change the way they are viewing the content on the screen. Switching the **Edit Mode ON** allows users with certain Roles in the system to add, delete, and

edit content and tools in the Course. Switching the **Edit Mode OFF** displays the Course as students would see it. The Edit Mode toggle will only appear to those users who have permission to use it.

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## COPY COURSE

1. Enter the course you want to copy content from.
2. Select **Packages and Utilities** in the **Control Panel** area of your existing course.
3. Select **Course Copy**.
4. In the **Select Copy Type** area, select **Copy Course Materials into an Existing Course**.
5. Click **Browse to locate the Destination Course ID**.
6. **Search** by Course ID, Instructor or Name/Description to access your course list.
7. **Select** the button next to the **Destination Course ID** of the course you want to copy the content to.
8. Select the items you would like to copy and click **Submit**.

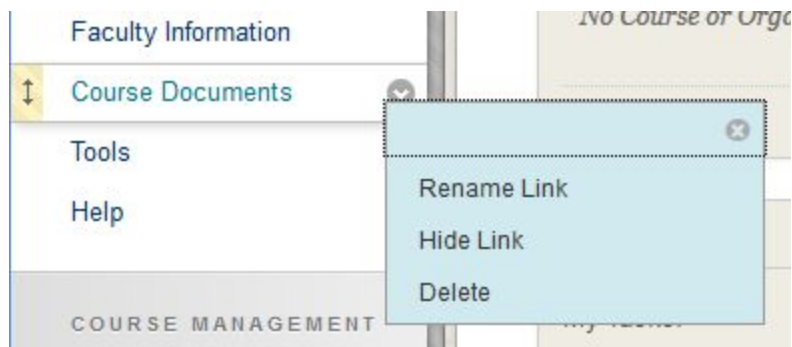
An email will be sent once the Course Copy task is complete. Once this email is received, check the destination course to verify that the selected materials were copied successfully from the original course. You will also see a message in yellow at the top of the destination course once the course copy is complete.

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## CHECK THE COURSE MENU

Confirm that the Course Menu consists of the buttons or links that you wish to use. If necessary, rename or modify the list of buttons. Make sure and check the Course Menu with **Edit Mode ON**. Instructors have direct access to edit and organize the Course Menu and may use the drag and drop feature to change the order of menu items. Course Menu items that do not contain any content are automatically hidden from student view but are visible to the instructor while in Edit Mode.

1. In the upper right-hand corner, select **Edit Mode ON**.
2. To add a new link to the Course Menu, click the “+” and select the area you want to add.
3. **Rename, Hide** or **Delete** links as necessary. When you point to an item you wish to edit, the action link will appear to the right of each item



allowing you to edit. **Note:** If you remove a menu item, all information within that area is removed permanently.

4. Organize your course menu using the drag and drop feature, which appears when pointing to an item. For longer course menus you may want to consider creating Subheaders and Dividers by clicking on the “+” icon and selecting these features.

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## SELECTING A COURSE STRUCTURE

Course structures are predefined course materials such as Course Menu links, instructions, and content examples that you can add to your course to begin the design process quickly.

When selecting a Course Structure, keep in mind the following information:

- A selected course structure’s content is added to your course and does not replace existing menu items and content in your course.
- A selected course structure's links appear at the top of your Course Menu.
- You can edit or delete course structure content in the same way as other created or imported content.
- The optional content examples are guidelines for creating your own course material. This content is set to unavailable so that students cannot view it.

**IMPORTANT!** Adding a course structure does not replace existing Course Menu items and content. The course structure's content is added to the existing content and Course Menu in your course, and you have the ability to edit. You are **not able** to default back to your original structure once you select a new one, you will need to manually edit the links.

To Select a Course Structure:

1. Select **Customization** in the **Control Panel** area of your existing course.
2. Select **Teaching Style**.
3. In the **Select Course Structure** area, select the name of the Course Structure you would like to use in one of the five focus areas, *Activity*, *Communication*, *Content*, *System* or *Time*.
4. Preview the structure on the right side of the screen and select **Use This Structure** if you are sure you would like to make the changes and click **Submit**.

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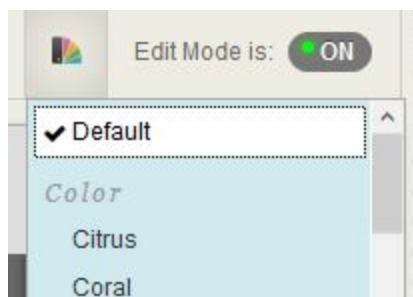
## SELECTING A COURSE THEME

You may easily add style and visual interest by customizing the look and feel of your

course using Course Themes. Course Themes are pre-built designs that allow you to change the color of course links, section and page headers, and the background wallpaper of the course.

To Select a Course Theme:

1. Select **Customization** in the **Control Panel** area of your existing course.
2. Select **Teaching Style**.
3. In the **Select Course Theme** area, select the theme you would like to use and click **Submit**.
4. You may also change the Course Theme using the **Change Course Theme** icon at the top of the course site.



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## SELECT MENU STYLE AND ADD A BANNER

You may select a color and style for your **Course Menu**.

1. Select **Customization** in the **Control Panel** area.
2. Click on **Teaching Style** and scroll to the **Select Menu Style** area, select **Buttons** or **Text** and make your selections. You also have the option to **Upload a Banner**.

You may easily create a Banner in PowerPoint.

1. Open a new PowerPoint presentation and select a Blank Content Layout.
2. Resize the slide 7 to 8 inches in width and 1.5 inches in height.
3. Design your banner using WordArt, Text boxes, ClipArt or digital Photos.
4. Save the Banner as a JPEG file.
5. To upload the Banner into Blackboard, select **Customization** in the Control Panel area.
6. Click on **Teaching Style** and scroll down to **Select Banner**, click **Browse** and Select the JPEG file of the Banner you created in PowerPoint and click **Submit**.

A **Banner Gallery** of PowerPoint templates is also available:

([www.fresnostate.edu/academics/blackboard/fac-staff/banner-gallery.html](http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/blackboard/fac-staff/banner-gallery.html)). Simply select the template you want to use, download it and modify the text to reflect your

course. All of the images were taken around the Fresno State campus and will provide an attractive and effective 'welcome mat' for your course.

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## TURN OFF ALL UNNECESSARY TOOLS

To simplify your class you will want to hide the links of all the tools you will not be using. If you decide to use a tool later in the semester you may make it available at that time.

1. In the upper right-hand corner, select **Edit Mode ON**.
  2. Select **Tools** on the **Course Menu**.
  3. Click **Hide Link** next to the tools that you are not using.
  4. To view the Tools that will be available to students, turn off the Edit Mode button.
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## CHANGE THE COURSE NAME TO REFLECT THE CURRENT SEMESTER

Changing the course name allows users to easily identify the course they are looking for in a list of courses on Blackboard.

1. In the Control Panel area, select **Customization** and **Properties**.
  2. In the **Name and Description** area, change the **Course Name** to reflect the current semester and click **Submit**.
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## UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

The Faculty Information link should contain information students will need to contact the instructor. This includes email, office location and office hours. Instructors may also add notes and upload a picture.

1. Select **Faculty Information** on the **Course Menu**.
  2. Select **Create Contact**, complete the template and click **Submit**.
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## UPLOAD YOUR SYLLABUS

The course syllabus and all revisions should be located in the Syllabus area located on the Course Menu. **Note:** It is recommended that you upload your syllabus as a PDF file.

1. Select **Syllabus** on the **Course Menu**.
2. Click on **Build Content** and **Create Item**.
3. Type in the name of your Syllabus and a description. Make sure and include the file type.
4. Browse for the file on your computer, **Name the Link**, select the **Options** and

click **Submit**.

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## UPDATE DEADLINES, DATES, AND MATERIALS

Go through all course content and make sure all URL's and documents are current and reflect the current semester.

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## MAKE YOUR COURSE AVAILABLE

All courses are set to unavailable by default. As soon as the course is ready it is the instructor's responsibility to make the course available. You will see (Course is unavailable to students) at the top of your course site until you make the course available to students.

1. Select **Customization** and **Properties** in the **Control Panel** area.
  2. In the **Set Availability, Make Course Available**, select **Yes** and click **Submit**.
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## POST A WELCOME ANNOUNCEMENT

In your welcome message you may want to include the date/time of class, a brief course overview, instructor's name and contact information, any textbook information, as well as how you intend to use Blackboard.

There are several ways to post Announcements in your course.

From the **Control Panel** area:

1. Select **Course Tools**.
2. Click **Announcements** link and **Create Announcement**.
3. Fill in the **Subject** and **Message** fields and select the appropriate **Options**.
4. Click **Submit**.

If your course opens to a **Home Page** and your Announcements are located within the Announcements module:

1. Select **Tools** on the **Course Menu**.
2. Click **Announcements** link and **Create Announcement**.
3. Fill in the **Subject** and **Message** fields and select the appropriate **Options**.
4. Click **Submit**.

If your course opens to an Announcements page:

1. Click **Edit Mode ON**.
2. Click **Create Announcement**.

3. Fill in the **Subject** and **Message** fields and select the appropriate **Options**.
4. Click **Submit**.

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## SEND AN EMAIL

Send an email to your students once the course is made available. You may want to consider copying and pasting the Welcome Announcement into the body of the email.

1. Go to the **Course Tools** area in the **Control Panel**.
2. Click **Send Email**.
3. Select the **Users**.
4. Type in a **Subject** and a **Message** and click **Submit**.

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## STUDENT PREVIEW

To experience your course exactly as your students do, click the Student Preview icon located at the top of your course.

While in Student Preview, you can do the following student activities:

- Submit assignments
- Take tests
- Create blog and discussion posts
- Create journal and wiki entries
- View student tools, such as My Grades



When you exit the Student Preview, you are prompted to keep or delete preview user and all its associated data. It is considered a best practice to remove the preview user and all the associated data so that the activity of the preview student is not associated with the course.

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## COMBINING COURSE SECTIONS

To request that course sections be combined into one course and the enrollments merged, complete the **Combine Course Request Form** found in the Faculty & Staff section under Forms on <https://blackboard.fresnostate.edu>. This is a permanent change for the term and requires signatures from all participating faculty. Complete and return the form to TILT.

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## GETTING HELP WITH BLACKBOARD

There are several ways to get help with Blackboard 9.1

- Mary Bennett, Instructional Designer • mbennett@csufresno.edu • 278-7203
- JoLynne Blake, Instructional Designer • jblake@csufresno.edu • 278-8788
- Sue Yang, Instructional Designer • suyang@csufresno.edu • 278-5782
- Blackboard Resource Center located in Studio 2 on the second floor of the Henry Madden Library: 278-7373
- Email: tiltsupport@csufresno.edu
- Blackboard Website: <https://blackboard.fresnostate.edu>