Blackboard: Frequently Asked Questions
Jacksonville University

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1. What is Blackboard?

Blackboard is a course management software, a tool that allows instructors to put some (or all) of the components of their courses online.

Instructors can use Blackboard to

- post files for their students' use
- allow students to electronically submit assignments
- hold virtual recitations and office hours
- continue class discussions outside of class
- administer tests and quizzes
- support student workgroups

... as well as to perform many other functions analogous to those that would take place in a physical classroom. Some professors that use Blackboard are teaching their courses entirely online, but many others use it to support or supplement their "in person" class instruction.

The Jacksonville University Blackboard system has been upgraded to the latest release, version 9.1 Service Pack 8 (June 2012). This new version of Blackboard has an updated look and feel, and several new features.

Blackboard 9.1, also called Blackboard Learn, has new features and capabilities that we are sure you will appreciate. Blackboard Learn uses a web 2.0 interface that allows users to drag-and-drop items that appear on the screen, select drop-down menus, and even access contextual help. You will enjoy using fewer clicks to navigate the system and complete tasks on your courses.

2. How do I log in to Blackboard?

To log in to JU's Blackboard server, use the Login button on the Portal’s Student Services page, or go to https://blackboard.ju.edu/ and click the "Login" button.

Blackboard is configured to use your JU username and password. This is the password that students and instructors use to login to WebAdvisor, Jacksonville University computers, e-mail and many more systems on campus.

If you do not know your username or password please contact the Helpdesk at 904-256-7200 or email helpdesk@ju.edu.
3. How do I learn to use Blackboard?

Most students find Blackboard to be fairly intuitive to use. Once you are logged in, you will see a list of the courses you are taking that are using Blackboard. To enter a course's website, click on the name of the course in the list. Once in the course area, use the menu on the left-hand side of the page to navigate to different areas of the class site.

Blackboard 9.1 Tutorials: Students | Faculty
Also, feel free to browse the online Blackboard Student Help | Blackboard Instructor Help.

4. Hardware and Software Requirements

If your computer does not have the proper hardware, Blackboard™ Learn Release 9.1 may run slowly or may not run at all. Prior to using Blackboard™ Learn Release 9.1 on your computer, compare your current system configuration with the system requirements below.

Hardware Minimum Requirements

- 1.5 GHz CPU or greater with minimum of 1GB RAM
- Network adapter: LAN (Ethernet) or wireless (WiFi)
- DSL or cable broadband Internet (Dial up not compatible)
  - 3G & 4G connections not recommended when taking tests
- CD/DVD drive and speakers may be required; refer to course requirements

Operating Systems, Web Browsers & Plugins

- Windows XP, Vista or 7
- MAC OS X 10 or later
  - OS x 10.4 Tiger not supported
- JAVA Runtime Environment 6
  - Blackboard Learn requires the latest version of Sun JRE 6.

To determine which web browser to use with the Blackboard Learn System, find your operating system in the left column and choose a web browser. When possible choose a recommended browser which Blackboard has certified compatibility. In addition, you should have at least two approved browsers installed on your computer to accommodate for ongoing browser version changes.
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### Microsoft Windows Operating System

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**Recommended** - fully tested and supported  
**Compatible** - partially tested but should function properly  
**Unsupported** - either impossible or not tested
The following technologies are not supported:

- Internet Explorer 6 and Internet Explorer 7
- Firefox 1.x, 2.0, 3.0, and 3.5
- Safari 2.0, 3.x (or any version on Windows)
- Mac OS X 10.4 "Tiger"
- Java 5

If the computer you are using has a different browser than those indicated above, you still may be able to use parts of Blackboard™ Learn Release 9.1. However, you may also experience problems, especially when completing quizzes and tests or using chat and the virtual classroom.

Blackboard™ Learn Release 9.1 advises that your web browser conforms to certain standards. If you have an out-of-date or unsupported browser, it is suggested you either download a certified version of your current browser or a different certified browser before attempting to log into Blackboard™ Learn Release 9.1.

Note (AOL) users:

The AOL browser is not compatible with Blackboard™ Learn Release 9.1. However, you can use your AOL Internet connection with one of the web browsers listed above for your operating system to access Blackboard 9.1.

Browser Configuration

Your browser must be configured properly as follows:

- JavaScript must be enabled.
- Cookies must be enabled.
- Pop-up windows must be enabled.

Browser Plug-ins

At a minimum, you will need three browser plug-ins to use Blackboard™ Learn Release 9.1: Adobe Reader, Adobe Flash Player, and the Java Runtime Environment plug-in. You may need additional plug-ins if the course you are taking includes multimedia elements such as QuickTime; your instructor will provide you with any additions you may need.

To download and install the current versions of Adobe Reader and Adobe Flash Player:

2. Click the “Get Adobe Reader” button.
4. Click the “Get Adobe Flash Player” button.
You will also need the correct version of the Java plug-in (note this is not the same thing as JavaScript). Blackboard™ Learn Release 9.1 will not run properly if you are using an incompatible version of Java or if you have multiple versions of Java installed. Verify your Java plug-in is functioning properly by visiting: http://www.java.com/en/download/help/testvm.jsp

Connection Speed

Once you have ensured that your computer has the proper operating system and hardware to run Blackboard™ Learn Release 9.1, you should verify that your Internet connection is fast enough to support Blackboard™ Learn Release 9.1. Online courses may require you to download/upload large files and often include streaming audio and video, both of which require faster connections.

- Dial-up – you should not be relying on dial-up while taking a course through eLearning. You may still use Blackboard™ Learn Release 9.1. However, you will encounter difficulties when loading pages, especially during peak usage times. You will also find that both audio and video playback can be very choppy. Additionally, downloading or uploading assignments may take a long time.
- Cable modems (Time Warner – CableVision) – this is the preferred connection to use when accessing Blackboard.
- Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) – this is a good quality connection to use.
- Satellite (such as Hughes Net) will work however you will encounter a latency (a delay) between the satellite connection and Blackboard Learn.

5. Common Log-in Problems:

If you have problems getting logged in, please look below for the specific error message you are receiving. If the given solutions do not help or if you are getting an error message that is not listed, please contact the HelpDesk.

- **Error Message:** "Error: Could not login. The specified user name does not exist in the system."
  - Cause #1: You have recently enrolled at JU -- it takes up to 24 hours for you to get into the system.
  - Cause #2: You are logging in with your complete email address as the username (abc123@ju.edu). The email system allows this, but Blackboard does not.
  - Cause #3: The program that automatically enrolls students in the proper Blackboard course sites is not working. Please contact the Call Center (helpdesk@ju.edu or 904-256-7200.)

- **Error Message:** "An error occurred while the system was processing this login request."
  - Cause: You are mistyping your username. Check your username and try again.
• **Error Message:** "An error occurred in the authentication module: Error occurred while trying to lookup the current session."
  - Cause #1: ju.edu is listed as a restricted site in your IE security settings.
  - Cause #2: Cookies are disabled entirely (under "privacy" in internet options in IE). To enable cookies: If you have one of the required browser versions, you can enable cookies with the following steps:
    Internet Explorer 7.0 or higher:
    Select Tools->Internet Options->Security->Custom Level Scroll down until you see the "Cookies" entry. Click the "Always accept cookies" selection, then click "OK."

• **Error Message:** "Could not login. You have not provided valid authentication credentials."
  - Cause #1: Plain, old, bad password. Check that your "Caps Lock" key is not on and change your password by having it e-mailed to you from the front page.
  - Cause #2: You’ve typed the wrong password three times in a row and your account is locked. Call the Call Center (904-256-7200) to have your account unlocked or wait 10 minutes for the account lock to time out.

• **Error Message:** "Alert! This client does not contain support for HTTPS URL's"
  - Cause: Browser does not meet minimum requirements for Blackboard. Update to a more recent version of the Browser.

• **Error Message:** "No Authentication credentials were provided with the request"
  - Cause: JavaScript is disabled in your browser or your security level is set too high. In IE, go to Tools > Internet Options > Security > Internet Zone. Click "Custom Level" and scroll down to the "Scripting" section (near the bottom.) Make sure "Active Scripting" is set to Enable.

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**6. Chat Problems**

Blackboard is generally easy to use, but the Virtual Classroom tool is the one area where students may run into problems. The good news is, once you get access to the Virtual Classroom area for the first time, you should not have experience further problems.
If you can't get Virtual Classroom to load:

Most probable cause: Java is not enabled or needs to be updated. Check to be sure that Java is enabled. In Internet Explorer, click on Start > Settings > Control Panel and select Internet Properties. Click on the Advanced tab and scroll through the settings to make sure that JIT compiler for virtual machine enabled is checked. Under "Java" in the list, make sure JRE 1.6.1 or higher is installed and functioning.

Other possible causes:

- Browser doesn't meet minimum requirements. Solution: Update your browser.
- A firewall is preventing you from accessing online chat. For people who access Blackboard from the workplace, especially, this tends to be a problem. Many corporate and/or personal firewalls block ports required by Virtual Classroom. If the IT folks in charge of network security in the location from which you are accessing Blackboard are willing, unblocking the following ports may allow access: 80, 443, 1433, 1376, 8000, 8007, and 8443. Another possible solution is the use of a VPN connection.
- Windows needs to be updated. Go to Microsoft's site http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com Download the "Critical Updates." You should also consider downloading the "Recommended Updates." This will help with the performance of your PC and also improve security issues.

7. Common Problems with File Attachments

- I submitted my file, but the instructor is unable to open it.

If you are a Macintosh user, make sure that your filenames do not contain spaces or any non-alphanumeric characters other than periods (no ampersands, commas, quotes, slashes, colons, etc.) You must add a file extension to the file name so that your instructor's computer will "know" what program to use to open it.

**Common file extensions include:**

- .doc  Word documents
- .xls  Excel spreadsheets
- .txt  Text documents
- .ppt  Powerpoint files
- .html HTML documents
- .htm HTML documents
• **I've posted a file, but no one can open it:**

Make certain that the file name does not contain any characters other than the standard letters, numbers, hyphens, and underscores. Other characters (apostrophes, etc.) in file names may cause people who try to access the posted file to get an error message "Requested file could not be found."

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### 8. Tests & Quizzes

- **Error message on submit:**

  Cause: Make certain that you hit the "save" or "submit" button only once. Double-clicking may cause an error message and may also delay submission of your answers.

- **You click on the quiz, but nothing happens:**

  Cause: You may need to turn off your pop-up blocker software.

- **Preventing problems with quizzes:**

  - Do not resize your screen after entering a quiz. Some browsers will refresh the screen when you resize the window.
  
  - Be cautious when using the <Backspace> key to correct errors in entered text. You need to make certain that your cursor is within the text-entry field before hitting <Backspace> or the browser may attempt to return to the previously-displayed page.

  - Depending on the settings for the quiz, students who attempt to view material on another website or in another area of the Blackboard course site may find themselves unable to return to complete the quiz. If the instructions for taking the quiz are not clear, please check with your instructor.

  - Make sure **you don’t use your browser’s back, forward and refresh buttons** during a test. This can interrupt your test and knock you out of the test. To move from question to question, users should only use the arrows within the testing window or the **Question Completion Status** list of questions.

  - **Do not double-click the start button on a test** while waiting for it to load. This can cause multiple instances of the exam to open, leading to some confusion. Depending on your PC and internet connection speed, it may take a little while to load a quiz. Make sure that, when accessing a quiz, you only click the link *once*. If you click a second time (on the keep-pushing-the-button-to-make-the-elevator-arrive-quicker principle) you may find yourself locked out.
- **Make sure you are aware of your time while taking an on-line test.** If your instructor sets a time limit, Blackboard will try to display a warning 1 minute before the time limit expires, but browser settings may prevent this warning from appearing. If your instructor sets a time limit in Blackboard, when you click open a test the clock will start and will not stop regardless of whether you save it and reopen later. It certainly may be prudent to have a back-up timer of your own. If you should get knocked out of an on-line test you should log back into Blackboard as quickly as possible to resume the test.

- **Instructors may set a limit as to when an on-line test is available,** often referred to as the “test window.” The link to open or re-open your test is only visible during this window. If your test also has a timer, you will not be ejected from the test at the end of the test window, but if that window has closed you will not be able to re-enter the test if you are knocked out of the test after that time, even if your timer has not expired. Start early enough during the test window so that you can complete the test before the window expires.

- **If you are disconnected from your test session** for any reason, you should close your browser, re-start the browser, and go back to the test in Blackboard. If your instructor permits, you will be returned to the test question you were just viewing. If your instructor selects the **Force Completion** option, however, you cannot re-enter a test. In such a case you must contact your instructor first regarding this.

- If the exam has been selected to show all questions at once, **you should periodically save your answers.** You can click the **Save** button next to each question as you select answers or scroll to the end of the page and click the global **Save** button. This will save your work thus far but will allow you to continue to other questions and even change earlier answers up until the time you click **Submit.**

- If test questions are presented one at a time, **only click the "next question" arrow once,** even if the response is slow moving to the next question. Each question is saved automatically by Blackboard as you move from one question to another so there isn’t any reason to hit **Save** before moving to the next question. That would just add an extra delay between questions.

- If you are typing an answer in a text box, be aware that **neither Blackboard nor your browser saves text as you type it.** One option is to click the **Save** button next to the question frequently so the text you have typed so far will not be lost. Another option that perhaps is more secure is to type answers to essay questions first in Notepad, save it there, and then copy and paste the answer into the test's text box.
If your instructor presents test questions one at a time, he can also choose whether to allow students to “backtrack”—that is, to go back to previously answered questions. If backtracking is permitted, you can go forward and backward to adjacent questions at any time using the test navigation arrows or to any question at any time using the Question Completion Status window. However, if backtracking is prohibited you can only move forward one question at a time, and you can only get to the end of the test to the Submit button by advancing through all questions one at a time. If your test has a time limit, you will need to keep this in mind in case you need to skip several questions to reach the end and click Submit before time expires.

After Taking an On-line Test:

After you submit your test, the information you will see next depends on the settings your instructor has selected. You may only see a confirmation that the test was submitted with no additional information. You may see a grade for the test if the instructor turns that on, if no test questions have to be graded individually, and if no time limit has been exceeded. If any questions require the instructor to assign a grade individually, you will see an exclamation mark (needs grading) instead of a grade. If you exceed a specified time limit, and you have not submitted the test, you will see a pencil and paper icon indicating that your attempt is Still in Progress. If you have exceeded the time limit, but submitted your test, you will see a green exclamation mark for the grade. If you have questions about this, you should contact your instructor.

9. Text Editing Problems

- Can't right-click and copy/paste text in the editing window
  Workaround: Use the keyboard shortcuts to copy and paste text. To copy text in the editing window, select it and use Ctrl-Insert or Ctrl-C. To paste text, use Shift-Insert or Ctrl-V.
- When accessing a page with a text editing window, you get a message prompting you to insert your Office 2000 CD
  This happens to some Blackboard users when they access anything that uses the DHTML Edit control (basically, any page with the fancy text editing window.) The problem is related to the way in which Office 2000 was installed on your PC. The quickest way to fix it is simply to insert the CD, if you have it to hand. Microsoft has a web page detailing the steps to fix the problem without the CD. If this is a JU computer (e.g. in your office or in a campus lab) you can call the Call Center at 235-2000 and they will arrange for someone to fix the problem for you.
10. How are students enrolled in Blackboard course sites?

Students are automatically enrolled in course sites based on information in the registration database. After a student registers for a class, she should be added to the Blackboard course site within about 24 hours.

If more than 24 hours have passed and a student is not showing up on the Blackboard roster, please contact the Blackboard support staff.

11. I've legally changed my last name, but Blackboard still shows my old name.

This is normal. Your display name will be the only piece information that will change. You will still need to login with your old username.

12. Why doesn't my email address show up in the class roster?

Your email address will be kept private unless you specify that you want it to be shared with other students in your class. To make your email address visible, click "Personal Information" in the Tools area of your Blackboard "MyJU" page. Click "Set Privacy Options," choose the information that you would like to have visible to others, and hit "Submit."

13. How do I change my Blackboard password?

Users need to go to the main JU password website at http://password.ju.edu

14. Can I have my Blackboard class mail go to a different email address?

This is not recommended. Many new e-mail systems have advanced filtering systems that may prevent e-mail being forwarded to reach its destination.
15. When I log in to Blackboard, I don't see my class listed.

Please be aware that many instructors do not use Blackboard at all, or do not make their course sites available to students until after the semester has started. If you aren't certain whether your class is going to be using Blackboard, please speak with your instructor.

It can take up to 24 hours between the time you enroll in a class and the time that the class shows up in Blackboard. If you know your course uses Blackboard and you don't see the class site listed after 24 hours, please speak to your instructor. He or she has the access to add you to the course.

16. I still see classes from past semesters. Can I get rid of those?

You should only see the current classes you are taking. However, if you do have this problem contact the instructor and they can take you out of the class.

17. Can I complete the courses at my own pace?

The courses are not self-paced. Students should read the course syllabus to obtain the layout/structure of the class.

18. This is my first time taking an online course. How will I know what to do?

Each class is set up differently. Instructors organize their Blackboard sites differently and choose different settings. When logging into the course for the first time, students should read all announcements and the course syllabus. Most instructors have directions for the course listed in the announcements. If you have any questions at any time, email your instructor, or contact the JU Blackboard Help Desk.
19. I have a question that isn't listed

Who to Contact:

Course Related Problems: You should contact your course instructor for any problems, which are course related - i.e., problems finding course material and resources in the Blackboard course web site. Instructors organize their Blackboard sites differently and choose different settings. It's a good idea to ask your instructors because often the answer is specific to the way they are doing things. It's also important for your instructors to know if you're having a technical problem that may affect your ability to do your assignments.

Platform Related Problems: If you are experiencing any trouble with Blackboard please contact the IT Helpdesk at 904-256-7200 or by sending an email to helpdesk@ju.edu. Please be sure to give or enter the following information in your issue ticket: Complete name, Email address, Student id, Operating System of your computer, Web Browser you are using (Name and version), Course id, Course Name and Area of problem. Be sure to give a full and detail description of your issue and include the steps to repeat it at our end. It's important to be as specific as possible so we can determine the problem.

For all other computer/network related issues you may contact the IT Helpdesk at 904-256-7200 or by sending an email to helpdesk@ju.edu.