

The design of your Blackboard course is important. The course menu should make it easy for students to quickly access learning materials and activities. Following the recommended layout, start with few items at the beginning and add/reveal more during the academic year. Choose a course theme and add a banner image to personalise your course.

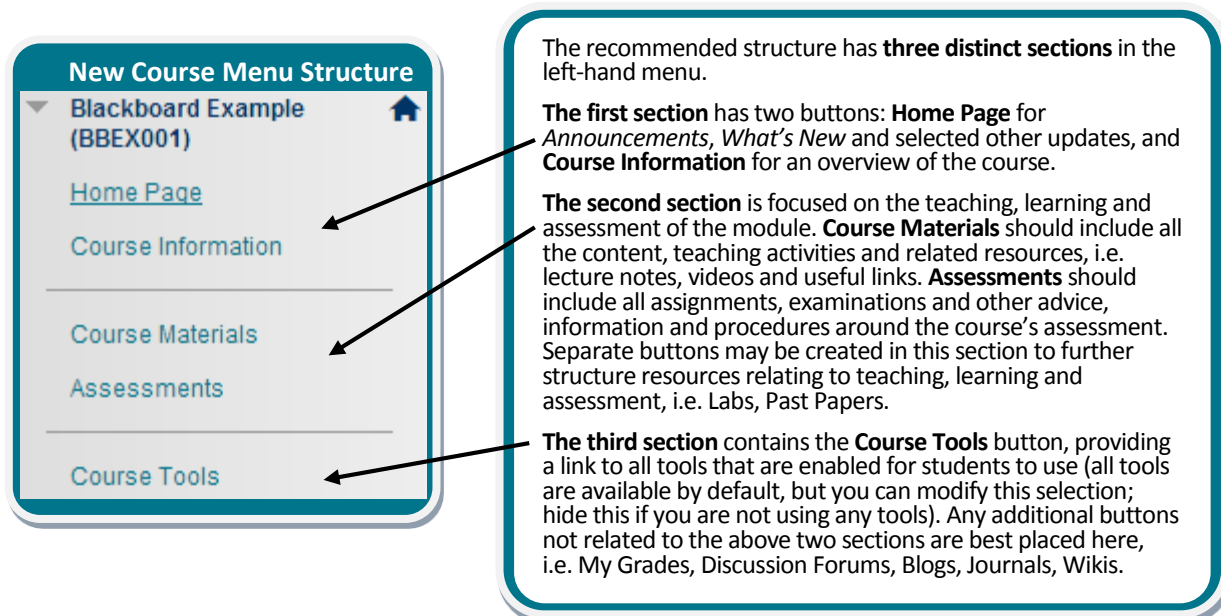
Log into Blackboard at
<https://blackboard.itcarlow.ie>

This guide shows how to edit your **Course Menu** and create a **Home Page** for your course (with banner image). The guide also shows how to manage the structure of your course. See also two short help videos:

[Updating a migrated course](#) and [Adding a Home Page and a course banner](#)

Recommended structure of your course menu

New courses will, by default, have the course menu structure below, providing a level of consistency that should make Blackboard easier to use. The course menu of existing courses can be updated to be consistent with this new structure.



The recommended structure has **three distinct sections** in the left-hand menu.

The first section has two buttons: **Home Page** for *Announcements*, *What's New* and selected other updates, and **Course Information** for an overview of the course.

The second section is focused on the teaching, learning and assessment of the module. **Course Materials** should include all the content, teaching activities and related resources, i.e. lecture notes, videos and useful links. **Assessments** should include all assignments, examinations and other advice, information and procedures around the course's assessment. Separate buttons may be created in this section to further structure resources relating to teaching, learning and assessment, i.e. Labs, Past Papers.

The third section contains the **Course Tools** button, providing a link to all tools that are enabled for students to use (all tools are available by default, but you can modify this selection; hide this if you are not using any tools). Any additional buttons not related to the above two sections are best placed here, i.e. My Grades, Discussion Forums, Blogs, Journals, Wikis.

Note to make your Blackboard course easier to use, organise the course's resources by first planning the structure of your menu and content: in a content area, use folders with an **organising principle** and avoid having folders within folders if at all possible; to reorganise, create a new content area with the folders you need and then use the **Move** option; and, give each folder a **clear title** plus a **brief description** and add a short description for each item, unless the title is sufficient. For more information, see p.2 of the *Blackboard Effective Practice Guide*.

Update the Course Menu

The Course Menu includes links to the content and tools in the course. Items in the Course Menu (and similarly in any Content Area) can be repositioned to reflect the way you want it displayed. The *Drag and Drop Arrows* enable you to use the mouse to reposition items directly on a page by clicking on the item, dragging it to the desired location, and releasing the mouse button.

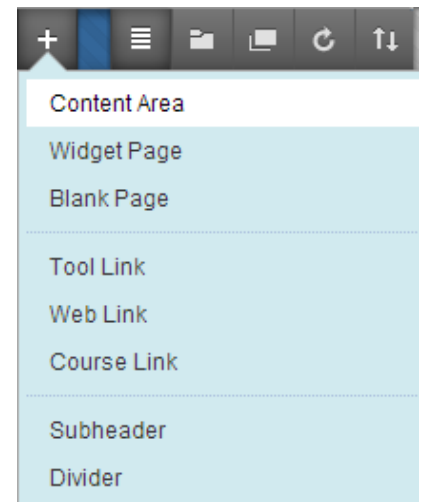


The *Action Link* beside a Content Area allows you to rename it, to make it available/unavailable to students (unavailable indicated by ☒ after the menu item), or to delete the menu item (be careful, if you delete a content area, you also delete all content within that area; note that individual files linked to will remain within *Course Files*, but students will not be able to access them).

Add Course Menu items

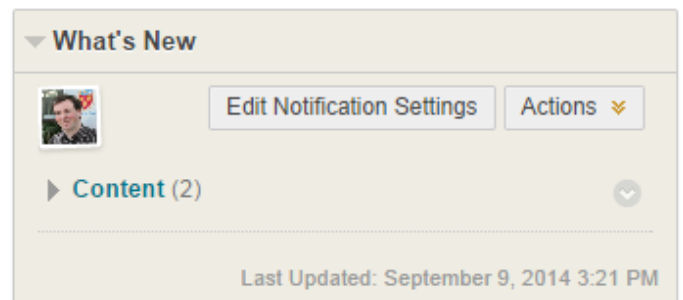
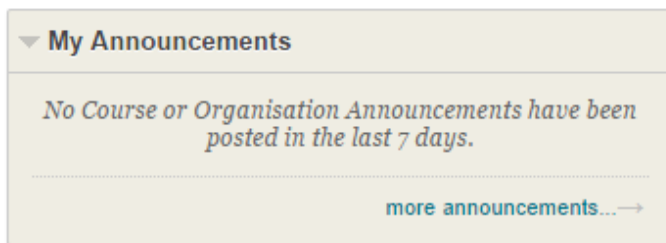
Add links on the Course Menu to items in the course, including *Content Areas* that provide direct access to content items such as handouts, links to resources, embedded videos and tests; *Tools* such as Discussion Boards and My Grades; internal or external links; and elements that help organise the menu like a *divider*.

1. Click the Add icon (+) above the Course Menu.
2. Select the item from the list.
3. Type the Name of the content item in the Name field.
4. Click Submit.




Add a Home Page

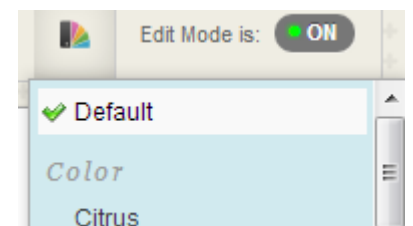
The **Home Page** is a *Widget Page*, an area of your course that contains widgets. Widgets are containers for information that is gathered from other parts of the course. The Home Page on the course menu usually contains the **What's New** widget (displays a list of new items in the course - students see new content that is available, new discussion board posts, new assignments, tests and grades posted) and the **Announcements** widget. It may also contain the **To Do** widget (displays upcoming deadlines), the **Calendar** widget (displays upcoming events) and more.



To create a Home Page, start by adding a *Widget Page* to the top of your course menu. Then select and position the widgets you wish students to be able to see on your Home Page, by clicking on *Add Course Widget*. If necessary, set the **Course Entry Point**, from the **Control Panel** expand the **Customisation** menu and choose **Teaching Style** – in section 2 you can select the menu item that will be your Course Entry Point.

Update the look and feel of your course with a Blackboard theme

For any Blackboard course, a quick way to update the look and feel is to change the Course Theme. The easiest way to do this is to click on  and choose a theme (or from the **Control Panel** > **Customisation** > **Teaching Style**).



Create a new banner and add the banner to your course

A banner image can be included at the top the homepage of the course (and at the top of any widget page added to a course). Create your banner using the University of Melbourne's [banner creation tool](#) (recommended), in PowerPoint or any image editing software, or with a website such as or [Banner Fans](#).

To add a banner to the Course Entry Point page, go to the **Control Panel** expand the **Customisation** menu and choose **Teaching Style** (see [University of Southampton](#) or a short [video from Blackboard](#) for more help).

For help and to learn more go to the **Blackboard Support** course in Blackboard for useful videos, handouts and links

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