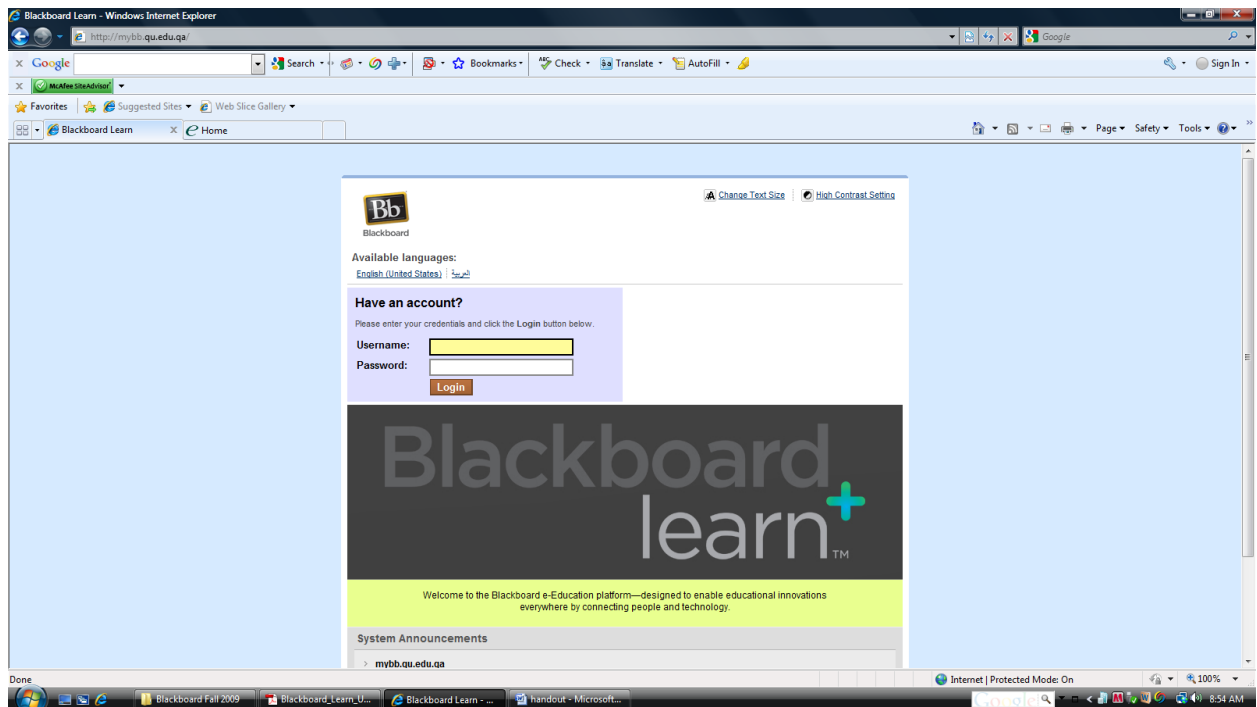


# An Introduction to Blackboard Learn Release 9



The following functions and features will be explored at this level:

1. Customizing the User Interface
  - 1.1 Making the Course Available
  - 1.2 Creating Style
2. Making an Announcement
3. Creating Contact Information
4. Uploading Content
5. Copying & Moving Content
6. Inserting Media Files
7. Creating Course Links & External Links
8. Sending & Receiving Messages
9. Sending E-mail Through Blackboard
10. Creating a Folder
11. Creating Tasks
12. Creating a Blog
13. Creating a Journal

## 1. Customizing the User Interface

The *Course Menu* appears on the left side of a course and contains links to materials and tools within the course. All courses contain a menu which is the main access point for a course's content. The Instructor can customize the style of the *Course Menu* and the content and tools available to users.

The *Course Menu* may be expanded or collapsed. Click the arrow icons to collapse the Course Menu so it is out of sight or expand it to its fullest size. The *Course Menu* may also be displayed in a separate window by clicking the appropriate icon.

The *Course Menu* can be displayed as a list of options or as a folder tree. The *List View* contains text links that lead to course materials and tools. The Folder View uses icons and expandable folders to access content and tools. (Blackboard Inc, 2008)

The instructor can customize the homepage display by dragging a module or by using the *Keyboard Accessible Reordering* on the top right angle

### 1.1 Making Your Course Available

To make your course available, simply follow these steps

1. In the URL text field, key in the *Blackboard Learn* URL: <http://mybb.qu.edu.qa>
2. Click the link of the course you are teaching.
3. In the Control Panel on the left, click 'Customization' and then 'properties'.
4. On the 'Properties' screen, click 'Yes' in step two and then click 'Submit'.

## 1.2 Style

### 1.2.1 Button Style

To redesign Course Menu, go to the *Control Panel*. Under *Customization*, click *Style*. In the Select Menu Style, click 'Buttons' and from the 'Buttons Library' select the button design you want.

Leave the default options for the remaining five choices if you wish.

### 2.2.2 Text Style

Click *Text* button. Under *Select Style Properties*, select a suitable background colour for the text. Select the desired colour for the text by clicking *Pick*. Click *Submit* to see the changes you have made.

## 2. Making an Announcement

To create an announcement, follow these steps:

1. Go to the Control Panel and click 'Course Tools' and then 'Announcements'.
2. Click 'Create Announcement'
3. Type in the subject of the announcement.
4. In the Text Box Editor, type in your announcement or message.
5. Under 'Options', choose date restrictions. If you don't set a date for 'Display Until' by ticking the box and changing the date, the announcement will continue to appear.

6. Click 'submit'.

### **3. Creating Contact Information**

Staff information page allows instructors to post detailed contact information and photographs about themselves and other course leaders.

Follow these steps to open the Add Profile page.

1. Under 'Course Tools' in the Control Panel, Click '*Contacts*'.
2. Click '*Create Contact*'.
3. Fill in the required information in the boxes provided
4. Click *Browse* to attach your photo
5. Type in your personal link if you have a Web site.
6. Click *Submit*.

If you want to modify your profile, click *the downward pointing arrows and select 'Edit'*. Follow the same steps as above. Notice that you can add/modify a folder. It is the same as the profile but there are no empty fields to fill in or a browse button to copy your photo.

### **4. Uploading Content**

Content areas are containers for materials, such as notes, tests and assignments. You can provide links to content areas in the course menu for students' convenience. Here is how:

1. Create a content area in the course menu.

2. Give the content area a name, such as 'Getting Started' or any other intuitive name and make it available to students.
3. Click 'submit'.

The new content area appears in the Course Menu. A small grey square appears next to the newly created area indicating that this content area is empty. Use the drag and drop function to rearrange the course menu links or use the Keyboard Accessible Reordering at the top of the course menu. The next step is to add course materials, such as links, test or assignments to the content area you have created. To create an item, follow these steps:

1. Under 'Content Information', add a name to for the item to be created.
2. Type in the text you want, using copy & paste functions or by direct input. You can add any media files you require by clicking the relevant buttons that appear in the Text Box Editor.
3. Click the 'Browse' button to navigate to the necessary files.
4. Select 'Options' for the item. You can schedule when the content will be available to students. Click 'Submit'. (Blackboard Inc, 2008)

## **5. Copying and Moving Content**

### **About Copy and Move**

You can copy any Content Item, such as Course Links, Folders and Learning Units. These can be copied from one folder or Course to another folder or another

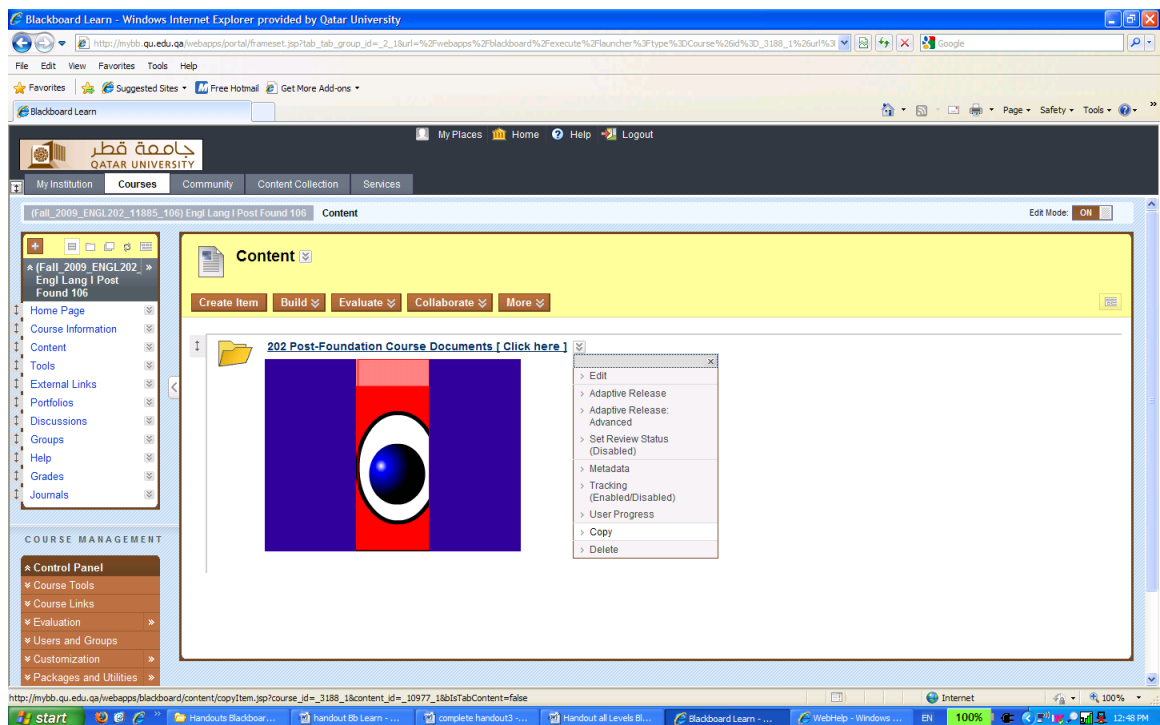
Course. Copying does not delete the content from the original location unless

'Delete Item After Copy' is selected. Content that is deleted after a copy is moved to the new location and does not exist in the original location any longer.

## 5.1 Copy Content

Instructors can copy Content Items from one of their Courses to another of their Courses, and from one Folder to another Folder in the same Course.

Follow the steps below to copy Course content:



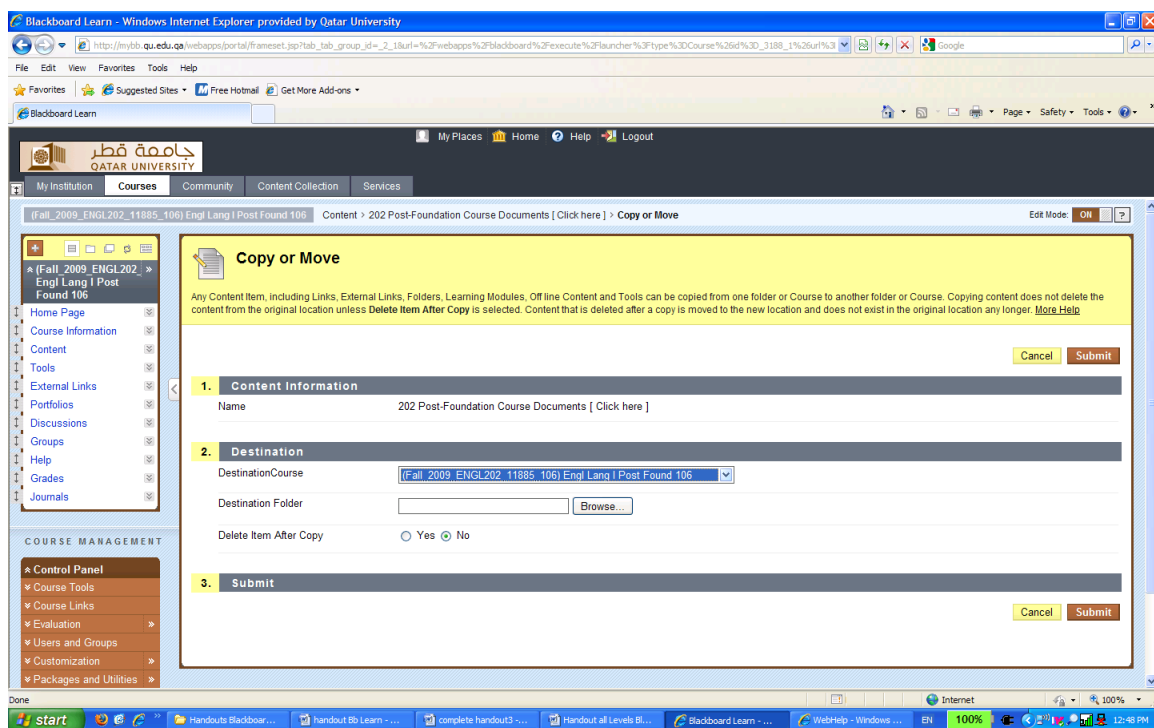
1. Open the Content Area containing the piece of content to copy or move.
2. Edit Mode is ON.
3. Click the downward pointing arrow next to the content item to be copied. Select the Destination Course from the drop-down menu (Only your courses will appear).

4. Select the Destination Folder. Use Browse to locate the desired folder.
5. Select **No** for Delete Item After Copy.

## 5.2 Move Content

Instructors can move Content Items from one of their Courses to another of their Courses, and from one Folder to another Folder in the same Course.

Follow the steps below to move Course content:



1. Open the Content Area containing the piece of content to copy or move.
2. Edit Mode is ON.
3. Click the downward pointing arrow next to the content item to be moved.



4. Select the Destination Course from the drop-down menu.
5. Select the Destination Folder. Use Browse to locate the desired folder.
6. Select **Yes** for Delete Item After Copy. (Blackboard Inc, 2008)

## 6. Inserting Media Files

In any content area, you can create any kind of media files, such as audio files, flash files, animation files and video files. Check the Text Box Editor below to view the relevant icons to use for creating such files.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Learn 'Create Item' page. The 'Content Information' section is active, showing a 'Name' field and a 'Text' editor. The 'Text' editor toolbar contains several icons for inserting media. Four arrows point from the 'Image icon', 'Video icon', 'Audio icon', and 'Flash icon' in the toolbar to labels in boxes below the screenshot: 'Image icon', 'Video icon', 'Audio icon', and 'Flash icon'.

To create a flash file, do the following:

1. Click the flash icon, the Insert flash/shockwave window appears.

2. Click the browse button to navigate to the desired file on your hard drive.
3. Set the width and height of the file.
4. Leave the default options for Loop and Autostart if you don't want the flash file to play continuously and play on start.
5. Click 'Submit'.

You can follow the same steps to create an audio file providing the file is not too big.

## **7. Creating Course Links & External Links**

### **7.1 Creating a Course Link**

To create a course link in a content area, follow these steps:

1. In the Course Menu, click one of the content areas, such as 'Content' or any content area you have created.
2. Click 'Build' and select 'Course Link'
3. Give an intuitive name to the course link. For example, if you are creating a link to blogs, give it the name 'links to Blogs'.
4. Write a description of the link in the text box editor.
5. Next, click the 'Browse' button to navigate to the desired link in the course.
6. Select 'Yes' to make the link viewable by students.
7. Click 'Submit'. The course link is ready for students' use.

### **7.2 Creating an external Link**

To create an external link in a content area, follow these steps:

1. In the Course Menu, click one of the content areas, such as 'Content' or any content area you have created.
2. Give an intuitive name to the course link. For example, if you are creating a link to Qatar University Website, give it the name 'link to Qatar University Website'.
3. Click 'Build' and select 'External Link'
4. Give an intuitive name to the external link.
5. Key in the URL of the external link.
6. Write a description of the link in the text box editor.
7. Select 'Yes' to make the link viewable by students.
8. Click 'Submit'. The external link is ready for students' use.

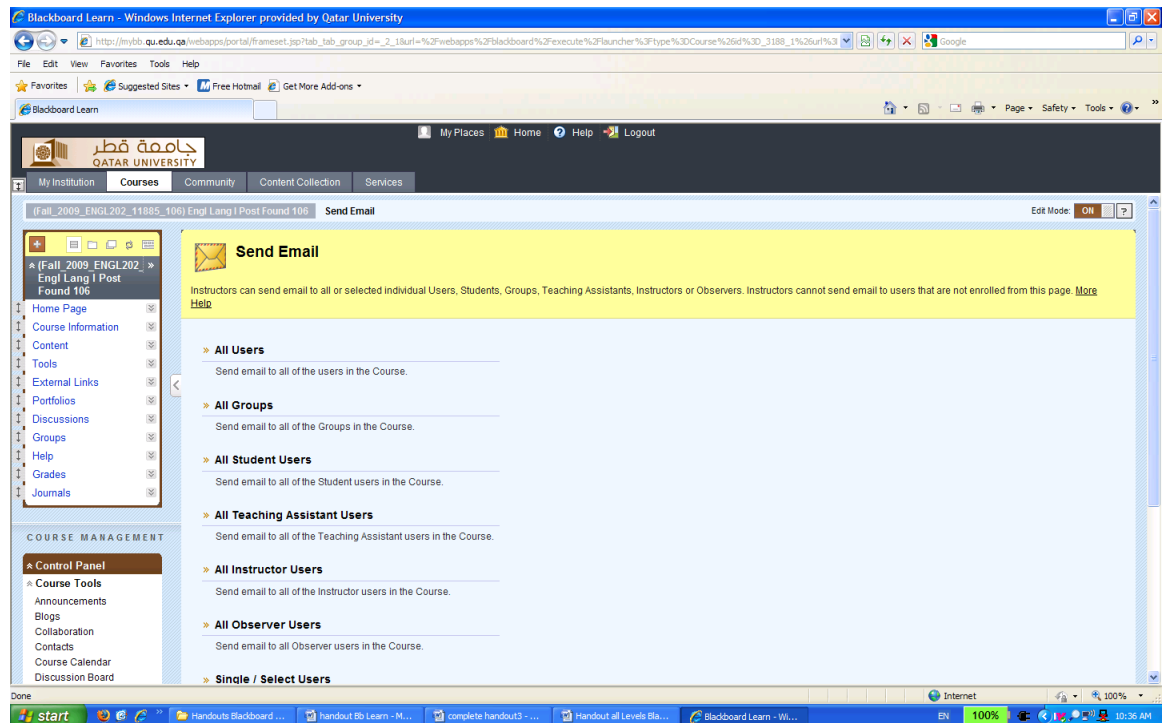
## **8. Sending & Receiving Messages**

To send messages, follow these steps:

1. Under 'Course Tools' in the Control Panel, click 'Messages'.
2. Click 'Create Message'
3. In the 'Compose Message' screen, click 'To' to add a recipient.
4. Type in a subject and write your message. Remember that only the course members can receive your messages.
5. Click 'Browse' to upload an attachment.
6. Click 'Submit'. In the 'Sent' folder, number 1 will appear, indicating the number of messages sent. Personal Folders can be added to the Messages area to organize received messages.

## 9. Sending E-mail Through Blackboard

You can send email to all users, all groups or a single user in the course. This function can be geared to writing homework as a student can attach a file. A student can do the same. To do so, type in the subject of the email and write the content of the email in the box provided. Attach a file if needed and click 'Submit'.



## 10. Creating a Folder

Under *Information* or *Content*, you can create a folder to put in all the files you have created. To do so, follow these steps:

1. On your course go to **Course Menu**.
2. In any **content area** like 'content', click 'Build' and then select 'Create Folder' from the drop-down box.
5. Give your folder a name and color and type in a text if needed.

14. 6. Click *Submit*.

15. Now you have created a new but empty folder. Go back to all the files you want to put inside this folder. To the right side of any file, click the downward pointing arrows and a drop down menu appears

16. 7. Select '*Copy*'.

17. 8. Browse to the *Destination Folder* and click on *Expand All* to see your folder.  
(click refresh)

18. 9. Write the destination folder by clicking the node.

19. 10. Click your folder and click *Remove Item after Copy* so check it.

20. 11. Click *Submit*.

## **11. Creating Tasks**

'Tasks' is a course module that appears in the Home Page and reminds you and the students of deadlines. To create a task, do the following:

1. In the Control Panel, click 'Course Tools' and select 'Tasks'.
2. In the Tasks window, click 'Create Course Task'.
3. Give a name to the task, write a description and set the Due Date by selecting the 'Date Selection Calendar'.
4. Set the priority level and click 'Submit'.

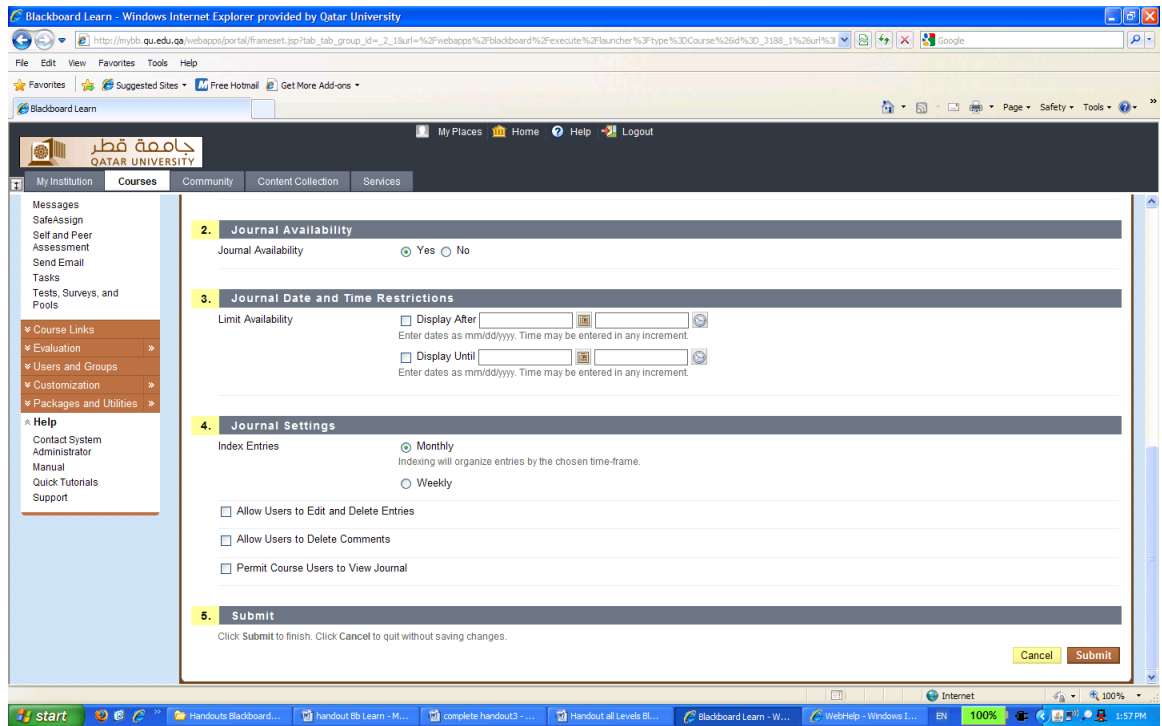
## **12. Creating a Blog**

With blogs, you can provide each student with an online journal for expressing ideas and developing writing skills. Other enrolled course members can read and comment on them. A blog can be created within a content area. Here is how:

1. Click the (+) sign on top of the course menu to provide a link to the blogs tool.
2. Select 'Create Tool Link'.
3. Add an intuitive name to the blog.
4. From the 'Type' drop-down box select 'Blogs'
5. Click the newly created blog button on the course menu.
6. Under Blogs, click the 'Create Blog' button for students.
7. Give the blog an intuitive name and add a description.
8. Make the blog available to students by clicking the radio button next to 'Yes'.
9. Under 'Blog Participation, click 'Course'. It is important to set the blog participation to meet your instructional goals. Individual blogs allow entries from only one student, whereas 'Course' blogs allows all students to create entries.  
(Blackboard Inc, 2008)
10. Under 'Blog Settings', you can tick both square buttons to determine how the list of entries appears to students and whether students can edit and delete comments
11. Click 'Submit' to create the blog.

### **13. Creating a Journal**

Journals are a self-reflective tool that allows students to post their personal reflections about the Course or discuss and analyze Course related materials. To create a journal, do the following:



1. In the Control Panel, click 'Course Tools' and select 'Journals'.
2. Make the journal available to students by clicking the radio button next to 'Yes'.
3. Set availability dates
4. Under Journal Settings, click the radio button next to any of the desired settings.

*Allow Users to Edit and Delete Entries*

*Allow Users to Delete Comments*

*Permit Course Users to View Journal*

5. Click 'Submit'.

End

