

ITS Resource Center Home

Student-Centered Tools in Blackboard

Contact Information

Instructional Technology Support Services
315-859-ITSS
course-support@hamilton.edu

- [Creating Small Groups](#)
- [Peer and Self-Assessment](#)
- [Blogs, Wikis, Journals](#)
- [Group File Exchange](#)

Creating Small Groups

If you plan to break your class into smaller groups to work on group projects, Blackboard provides the tools to create a group and enable group tools such as e-mail, discussion boards, blogs, wikis and many more. Instructors can create groups or sets of groups and manually enroll students or allow students to enroll themselves. Group sets can facilitate groups of students working on small-group projects. In addition, students can create and personalize their own groups. Groups can work on assignments together and the group can receive a single grade for the assignment (or individual grades, if desired).

1. In the Control Panel area, expand the sub-menu under "User and Groups" and select Groups.
2. Under "Create Single Group," you can select Manual Enroll or Self-Enroll.
3. Under "Create Group Set," you can select Self-Enroll, Manual Enroll or Random Enroll.
4. The options will differ slightly for these different types of groups, but the basic information required is:
 - Enter a Group Name and any description
 - Select which functions you would like the group to have.
 - Select other options as needed.
 - Click **Submit**.

Once the group has been created, students can reach it from either the Groups page or the Tools area. Only instructors and group members can access their particular group. If you need to modify a group already created, click the Edit Mode switch to On, then click the chevron next to the group's title and select Edit.

Peer and Self-Assessment

This is a new tool to allow students to evaluate each others' work. To set this up:

1. Go to the area of the course in which you would like students to access the assessment (for example, the Assignments area).
2. Click the Edit Mode switch to On, then select "Self and Peer Assessment" from the "Create Assessment" button menu.
3. Fill out information as desired; click Submit (this will automatically add an item to the Grade Center).

4. Now click the Create Question button on the following page and enter questions and model answers for the students to use in the assessment.
5. You can also preview the evaluation and submission samples.
6. You can access all submissions and evaluations and enter grading results in the Grade Center.

For a much more in-depth guide, please see [Self and Peer Assessment](#) from the University of Melbourne.

Blogs, Wikis, Journals

All of these tools can be accessed (by instructors and students) from the Tools page.

Blogs

Blogs are an open communications tool for students to share their thoughts within a course. Blogs consist of entries by the owners and comments by the readers. There are three different types of blogs: course blogs (all enrolled users can post and comment); individual blogs (only the owner can post, all others can comment); and group blogs (for members of a defined group). Instructors have full access to everything and can grade blogs.

Wikis

Wikis are used to create a collaborative space within the course where all students can view, contribute, and edit content. Wikis can also be used as a resource for students to view information and content relevant to their course. Wikis can also be set up just for groups and can be graded.

Journals

A Journal is self-reflective tool for students. Only the student and the instructor are able to view journal entries. Students can enter text, images, links, multimedia, mashups, and attachments. Journals can be graded in the Grade Center.

Group File Exchange

Every course section in Blackboard has an automatically-created group in the "Groups" area which has a title such as "ITS_100_01_FA2011_Group". It contains all the students for that section and is automatically updated as students add and drop courses. These automatically-created groups can be used for a number of different purposes, such as group file exchange, viewing sub-groups of students in the Grade Center, and for group assignments. For example, if you need an area in Blackboard for students to share files, just tell your students to:

1. Click on "Groups" in the Tools area.
2. Click on the name of the group that looks like a course id and ends in "Group."
3. Click on the "File Exchange" tool in the Group Tools area.
4. Click the "Add File" button and browse to the file to upload.
5. Click "Submit."

All students in the course will be able to access all the files in this File Exchange area.

Last Updated: July 23, 2012