

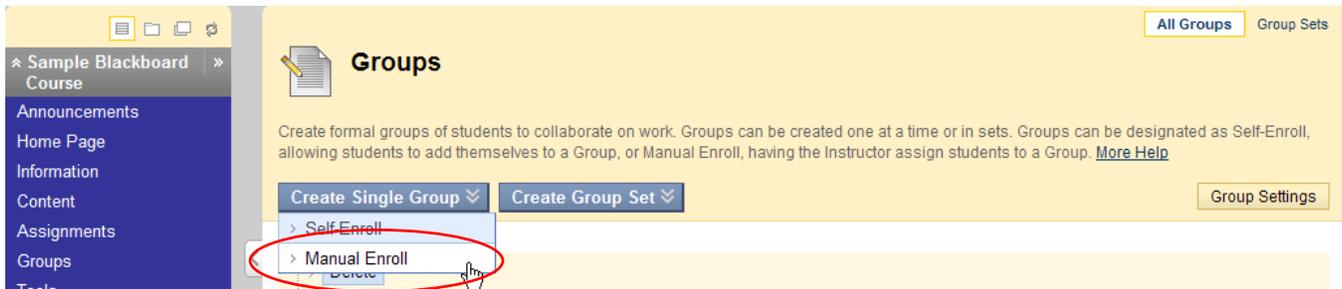
# How to Connect Groups to Other Features of Blackboard

Any group in Blackboard can be used in a wide variety of contexts, connected to a number of other features in Blackboard which increase your flexibility in using Blackboard in your class. Here are a few ideas of how to use groups to achieve your instructional goals.

## Creating a Group in Blackboard

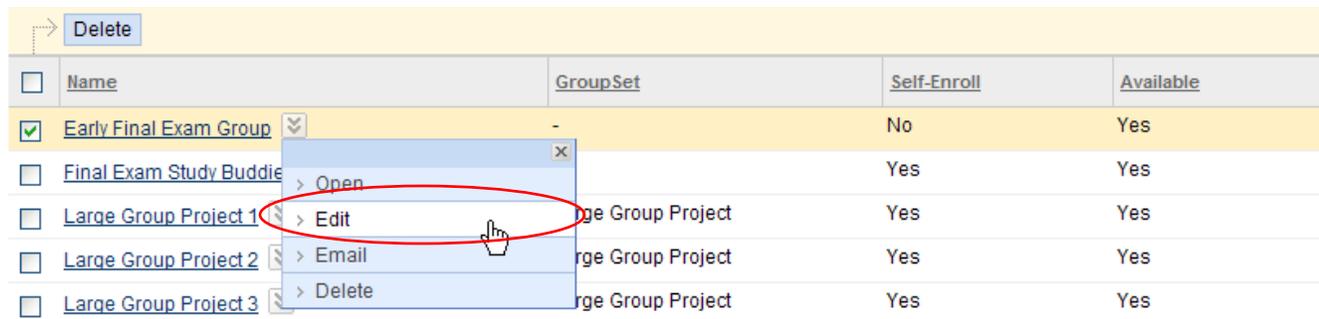
You have a number of options available when creating groups, including how students will be enrolled, what tools will be available, whether the group can be “personalized,” and more.

First, expand the sub-menu under “Users and Groups” in the Control Panel area and select “Groups.” Under “Create Single Group,” you can choose “Self-enroll” to allow students to pick their own groups or “Manual Enroll” to assign them to groups yourself. (Note: if you are working in a situation which requires multiple groups, such as small group project work, you may want to see the document “Using Group Sets in Blackboard” which explains Group Set features.)



If you select the “Manual Enroll” option, the following page will allow you to specify a name, description, availability, selection of tools, and give you a panel where you can assign students to the group. If you select the “Self-enroll” option, the following page will give you all the options above, except that you will also create a “sign-up sheet” where students can pick which group they would like to be part of. You will also need to set the maximum number of students for this group. For both types of groups, you can also allow students to personalize their groups if desired.

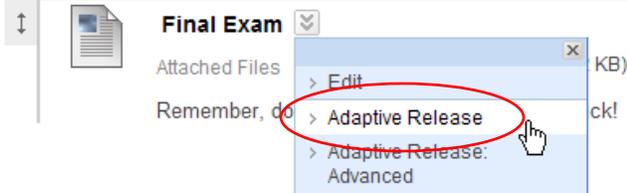
To change any features or memberships of a group, go back to the Users and Groups/Groups page and click the “chevron” which appears to the right of the group name. Then select “Edit” to change features or members, “Email” to send email, “Open” to see other areas, etc.



Students will access the groups either from the Tools/Groups area or from the “My Groups” menu which will appear underneath the main course menu once they have been assigned to or signed up for a group. Students can sign up for a group by clicking the “Sign Up” button which appears next to the group name on the Groups page. Students can also create their own groups from the Groups page (by clicking the “Create Group” button) if you have left this option available.

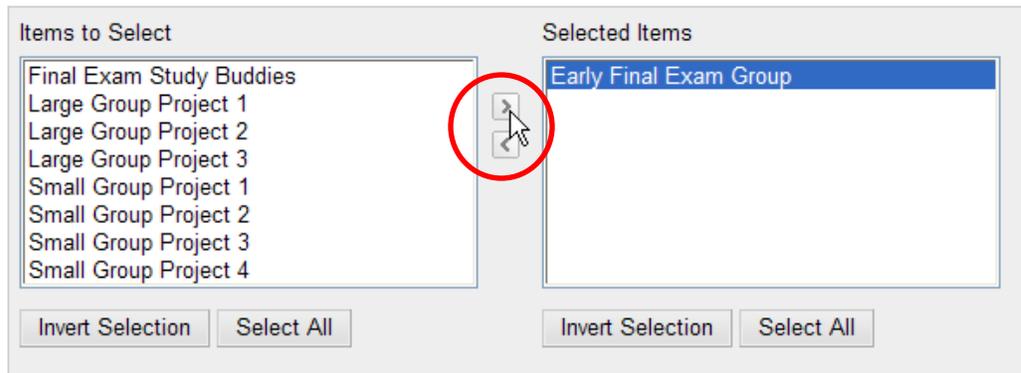
## Groups and Adaptive Release

Let's say that you need to release your final exam early to a few students. If you create a group for these students, you can then use "adaptive release" rules to enable these students to access the exam early. Just upload the document as you normally would (using "Item" in the "Build Content" menu), then click the chevron next to the item name and select "Adaptive Release."



On the following page, you can see all the criteria for release, including dates, individual users, groups, grades on previous assignments, or review status. In this example, just move your Early Exam group into the Selected area, and now only these students will be able to access the exam.

Course Groups

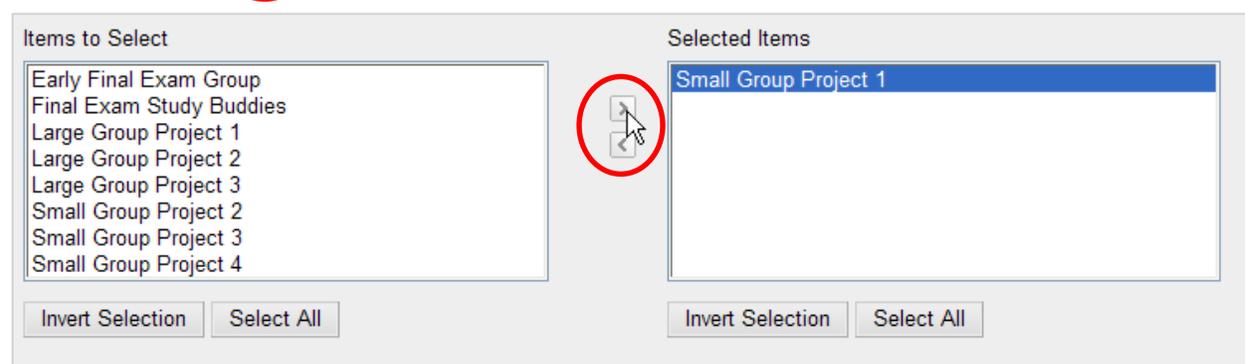


## Groups and Assignments

One can create assignments for groups, and then assign grades for group and/or individual contributions. When creating an assignment (under the "Create Assessment" menu button), look in section 6, "Recipients," and select "Groups of Students." Then select one or more of the groups listed.

If any students are enrolled in more than one group receiving the same assignment they will submit more than one attempt for this assignment. It may be necessary to provide these students with an overall grade for the assignment.

Recipients  All Students Individually  Groups of Students



When any student submits the assignment, it will be submitted for the entire group. The group can be given a single grade or each member of the group may be graded individually. One may also give feedback to the group and/or individual students.

## Groups and Sharing Files

Let's say that your students are collaboratively editing a document, or they need a space to share material. They can use the File Exchange area of a group for these purposes. This could be in a group which you create or in one of the section or course groups. Your students would go to the Groups pages, click on the title of the group, then click on "File Exchange" in the "Group Tools" area. They would then click the "Add File" button, enter the name, browse to the file, click Submit, and any file uploaded would be available to all students in the class, section or group.

The image shows two screenshots from a learning management system. The top screenshot is titled "Group Properties" and contains a "Group Description" field with the text "This is a work space for your group." Below that is a "Group Members" section with a dropdown arrow and two listed members: "Average Student" and "Demonstration User". The bottom screenshot is titled "Group Tools" and lists several options: "File Exchange", "Group Blog", "Group Discussion Board", "Group Journal", and "Send Email". The "File Exchange" option is circled in red, and a mouse cursor is pointing at it.

Groups can have blogs or journals for themselves in addition to email, discussion boards, file exchange, tasks and any other tool listed in the Create/Edit Group page.

## Managing Group Discussion Boards

The list of Discussion Boards in the Control Panel/Tools area can be a bit confusing because this page shows all discussion boards for the course, including those for groups within the course space. It's hard to know which one to use if you want to start a discussion for your entire class. Here's a good example:

The image shows a screenshot of a "Discussion Board" management page. On the left is a "Control Panel" sidebar with "Discussion Board" highlighted in red. The main content area is titled "Discussion Board" and contains a table listing discussion boards. The table has columns for "Discussion Board", "Forums", "Participants", and "Posts". There are five rows of data. Below the table, it says "Displaying 1 to 5 of 5 items" with "Show All" and "Edit Paging..." buttons.

Discussion Board	Forums	Participants	Posts
<a href="#">GOVT 117W 01 SP2010</a>	0	0	0
<a href="#">GOVT 117W 01 SP2010 Group</a>	1	0	0
<a href="#">PHIL 117W 01 SP2010 Group</a>	1	0	0
<a href="#">GOVT 117W 02 SP2010 Group</a>	1	0	0
<a href="#">PHIL 117W 02 SP2010 Group</a>	1	0	0

The first discussion board listed is the one for your entire class; all the remaining boards are connected to various section or course groups. To avoid this confusion, just go to the Tools page in the main Course Menu and select Discussion Board. This will direct you (and your students) to the main class discussion board only.

From the students' point of view, it's easier to keep track of discussion boards because they do not have access to the Control Panel/Course Tools. They can only access discussion boards via the Tools area or from the groups they are enrolled in.