

Exploring a Blackboard Course

Find out how to access your course controls, add and edit the course menu, and edit the default Home Page.

▶ Getting Orientated Video



Direct URL: <https://youtu.be/YfQ--kd23ts?list=PLontYaReEU1tzu1T5gfiX-JQA5nBc3isN>

Video Description: Instructors, take a quick tour of your Blackboard Learn course environment. Find out how to access your course controls, add and edit the course menu, and edit the default Home Page.

+ Exploring a Blackboard Course Instructions

The Homepage

The Home Page is the default start page for new courses. It informs students of new content and due dates. It is divided into modules and you can select which of these modules are visible to students. The modules are similar to those found on the LEARN@PolyU tab, but the information appearing refers only to the course currently being viewed. The Home Page can be customized in different ways.

The screenshot displays the Blackboard course homepage for a user named David Alan WATSON. The page is titled "Home Page" and features several modules: "My Announcements", "My Tasks", "Needs Attention", "To Do", and "What's Due". The interface includes a navigation menu on the left, a top navigation bar, and a footer with copyright information. Red circles labeled A through F highlight specific UI elements: A (PU logo), B (Announcements link), C (Control Panel link), D (Add Course Module button), E (User profile), G (Customize Page button), and F (Edit Mode toggle).

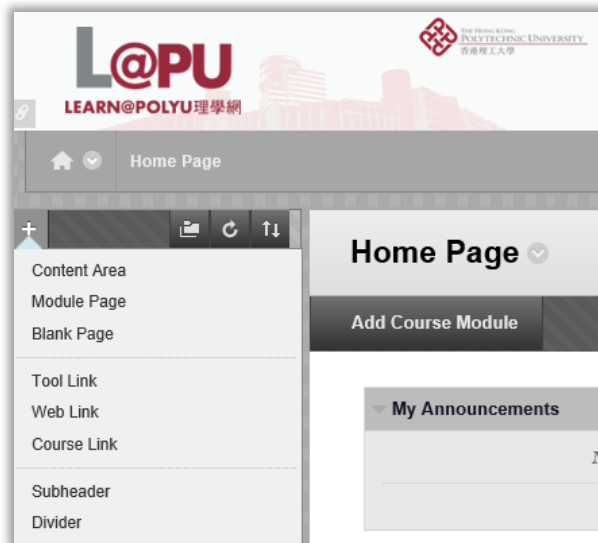
- A Course-to-course navigation
- B Course Menu
- C Course Management Panel
- D Add Course Module
- E Tabs
- F Edit Mode
- G Customise Page

- Try re-ordering the modules using drag and drop: to move a module, point to the title bar to access the four arrows.
- *Press and drag* the module into its new location and release.
- To change the colour of your page click on *Customize Page*.
- You can add course modules containing content, links and tools by clicking on *Add Course Module*.

The Course Menu

The Course Menu is located at the top left of the course interface. It has a similar function to the index in a book. It is the main access point for your course content, tools and activities and will be seen by your students. You will need to add, remove and modify items in the Course Menu as you develop your course.

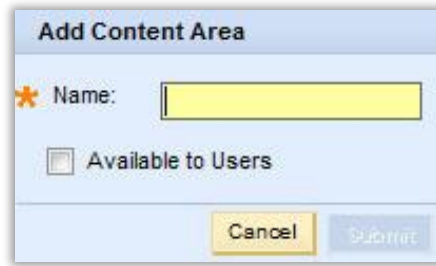
- Make sure that the *Edit Mode* is on in order to see the Instructor controls and to be able to add, remove, and modify content and tools.
- Go to the top panel – the Course Menu. Click on the (+) icon and then on *Content Area*. This opens up a Content page which is currently empty.



- Course Content areas can be used to organize course content and materials (e.g. assignments, tests, discussion boards etc.).
- A Course Menu can include direct links to various course Tools, and direct links to other parts of the course, such as Assignments, for easier access. External Links may also be added.
- You can hide the Course Menu in order to give you greater screen space. Run the cursor over the space just to the right of the Course Menu and you will see and a *Hide Course Menu* box – simply click to hide – and reverse the process to retrieve the Menu.

Adding Items to the Course Menu

New items can be added to the Course Menu. When doing this it is important to remember to check Available to Users to make the item available to students. Leaving it unchecked means that item will not be visible to Students.



- To add a new content area click on (+) and type a new name in the Create Content Area field, for example, *Getting Started*. Your new course content menu link appears. Create two more Content Areas: *Chapter One* and *Chapter Two*.
- Add a Tool Link to the course menu and name it *Discussions*. Select the tool type e.g. Discussion Board.
- Notice that each item created in the course menu has a drop-down contextual menu with options: *Rename Link/Hide Link*.
- Also notice the drag & drop arrows appear on the left if you run your cursor in this area. New items will always appear at the bottom of the list but you can drag & drop them to change the order.

The Control Panel

The *Control Panel*, located on the bottom left of the screen under *Course Management*, is something you will need to use frequently to build and manage your course. This panel is only visible to the Instructor or those with similar roles and will not be visible to your students.

Course Tools

The contextual arrows on the Control Panel give you access too many important and useful areas for working in your course and obtaining information about its functions. The Course Tools in the Control Panel are especially important.

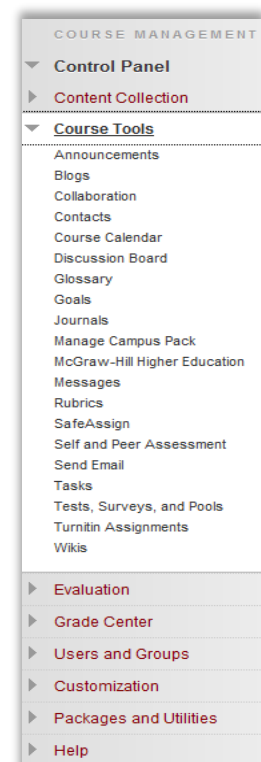
- Click on Course Tools in the Control Panel to view the different tools available to you.

Note: We will only introduce you to the some of the basic communication /course management tools in this workshop.

Users & Groups

Users allows you to see who is enrolled in the course together by *Name, NetID, Role and email*. As an Instructor you may enrol others to have access to the course.

The *Groups* tool allows you to organize Students into Groups of any size. You can provide communication and collaboration tools that only Group members can access. Groups can



be created one at a time or in sets and be designated as Self-Enrol, allowing students to add themselves to a Group, or Manual Enrol, where you assign students to a Group.

Help

You will find Help at the bottom of the Control Panel. Here you will find:

- *Blackboard Help*: a searchable text-based index of help from Blackboard on a wide variety of topics
- *Contact Support*: an email link to ITS help at PolyU
- *Video Tutorials*: a wide range of short instructional videos (approx. 2-5 minutes) from Blackboard that will assist you in completing many tasks.