GETTING STARTED IN BLACKBOARD

2018-19

WHAT IS BLACKBOARD?

Blackboard is an online site for each module that offers a range of materials for supporting teaching and learning.
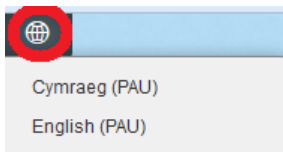
GETTING STARTED

You can log into Blackboard from any computer connected to the Internet using a browser, such as Google Chrome, Firefox etc.

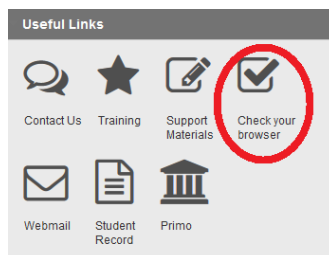- Open a browser and enter **https://blackboard.aber.ac.uk**

- Select a language preference

- Login using your AU username and password.

- **Check** your browser and operating system are supported, go to **Useful Links** and click on **Check your browser**

If your browser is unsupported, some Blackboard features may not work as expected. Students, for example, should use a supported browser when submitting assignments or taking assessed quizzes.

Alternatively, if you are using an AU computer, access Blackboard by clicking the desktop icon. Blackboard can also be accessed from the **Current Students** webpage by clicking on **Your Sites** and **Blackboard**.
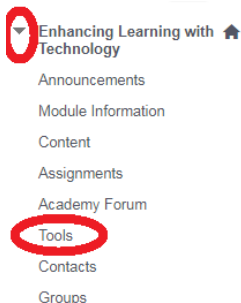
OVERVIEW

TABS

After you have logged in, Blackboard shows your modules for the current academic year.
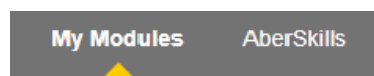
- Notifications of new items in a module appear next to a module

- **Announcements –** New announcements for modules appear on a modules front page.
- **Tools –** contains personal tools.

My Modules - click on the **My Modules** tab to see all of the modules you are enrolled on for the current academic year, or your modules from previous years:
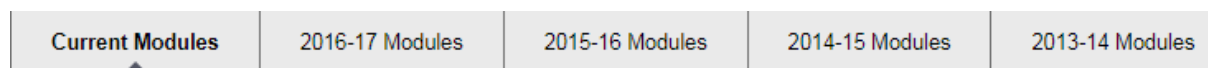
AberSkills – Is a study skills resource portal for students you may wish to direct your students to:
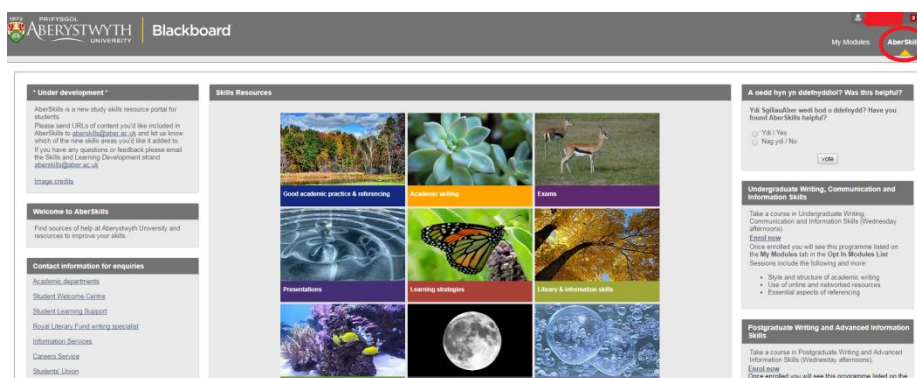
TROUBLESHOOTING BLACKBOARD ACCESS

Access to Blackboard feeds from AStRA (Aberystwyth Student Records and Admissions System). If you, or someone else, is having difficulty accessing or seeing content in a module in Blackboard, check the information below.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE CANNOT ACCESS BLACKBOARD:

See FAQ 709 for further information.

- Check the URL is correct: blackboard.aber.ac.uk and the username and password have been entered correctly (do not include @aber.ac.uk after the username).
- Check the device used has an Internet connection and try using a different browser (we recommend Firefox or Chrome)
- If the device has an Internet connection, check to see if someone else is having the same issue.
- If both of you cannot access Blackboard, check IS News Updates to see if there is planned service downtime or service failure. If there are no updates, contact Information Services.
- If only one of you can access Blackboard, double-check that the password and log in credentials are correct. If you have recently changed your password, you may have to wait up to an hour before you are able to access Blackboard.
- If your log in credentials are correct and you are still unable to access Blackboard, contact Information Services.

A STAFF MEMBER CANNOT SEE A MODULE IN BLACKBOARD

See FAQ 594 for further information.

- Members of teaching staff access to Blackboard is automatically granted if they are listed as a member of staff for a module in AStRA.
- Check the module record in AStRA and update the details if the member of staff is not listed. It can take up to 48 hours for them to feed through into the module on Blackboard.

- If they are listed as teaching the module on AStRA but cannot see the module in Blackboard:
  - They may have been deleted from the module:
    - Login into Blackboard and go to the moule that they should have access to
    - Go to the Control Panel, select **Users and Groups** and click on **Users**
    - Select **Find Users to Enrol**
    - Enter their username (University login without @aber.ac.uk) or click **Browse** search by Last Name
    - Select the role
    - Click **Submit** and **OK**

A STAFF MEMBER CANNOT EDIT CONTENT

It may be that the staff member does not have the correct role for editing in Blackboard. The role that a staff member has in a module, and their access level, depends on the role allocated to them in AStRA. See FAQ 619 for further information about user roles.

- If they have the incorrect role ensure the role is correct for the module in AStRA. If it is incorrect in AStRA, amend and wait 48 hours for the user role to change.
- If the role allocated in AStRA is correct but they still do not have correct role, or it has been 48 hours since the user role was amended in AStRA, contact Information Services.

A STUDENT CANNOT SEE A MODULE IN BLACKBOARD

See FAQ 594 for further information.

You might receive queries from students asking why they cannot see a module in Blackboard. The following should be checked:

- As student's access to Blackboard depends on the modules they are enrolled on in AStRA check their record in AStRA to make sure their module enrolment is correct. If they have recently changed modules it can take up to 24 hours before they can view the module in Blackboard.
- If the AStRA record looks correct the student may have been deleted from the module. To re-enrol them on a module:
  - Login to Blackboard and go to the module that they should have access to
  - Go to the Control Panel, select **Users and Groups** and click on **Users**
  - Select **Find Users to Enrol**
  - Enter the username (University login without @aber.ac.uk) or click **Browse** search by Last Name
  - Select the role
  - Click **Submit** and **OK**
- If, after 24 hours, the student does not have access to the module in Blackboard but the AStRA record is correct contact Information Services.

A STUDENT CANNOT SEE A CERTAIN ITEM IN BLACKBOARD

Students enrolled on a module have the role of Student assigned to them. This gives them access to view the Blackboard module. The student role has no access to the Course Management panel. Registered students are automatically assigned this role following the registration process. If you are an instructor or a departmental administrator you can view all the content in the module, regardless of whether it is hidden or not. If a student can view the module but cannot see certain content in a module:

- Ensure the content is visible and available to students.
- If the symbol next to an item is greyed out this means that the content is unavailable to view by students:

- To make it available, ensure **Edit Mode** is on
- Click the downward arrow next to content:
- Select **Edit**
- Go to **Permit Users to View this Content** and click **Yes**, **Submit** and **OK.**
- You can also restrict when this content displays to users. To do this, amend the **Display After / Display Until** dates and time frames and click **Submit** and **OK.**
- Check that the content is available to students by entering student preview:
  - Click on this symbol:

A STUDENT CANNOT SEE CONTENT IN THEIR GROUP

Groups are collections of students in Blackboard that Instructors create. These groups can be assigned manually, automatically or by students signing themselves up. You can learn how to create a student group by following the [instructions in FAQ 534.](#)

To add a student to a group:

- Go to **Course Management**
- Click **Groups**
- Select **Edit Group** for the group that you want to amend
- In the top corner select **Add Users**
- Enter the details of the student that you would like to add to the group and click **Submit** and **OK**

To remove a student from a group: On the **Edit Group** page, click the symbol to remove the user.

ACCESSING A MODULE

To access one of your modules in Blackboard, click on **Current Modules** for modules in this academic year, or a tab for a previous academic year for previous year's modules:
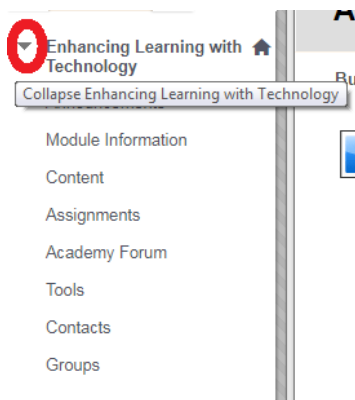

INSIDE A MODULE

Course menu - A course menu appears on the left-hand side of the screen. You can hide the course menu by clicking on the arrow that appears when you hover your mouse over the right-hand side of the panel. To show the course menu again, click the arrow a second time:
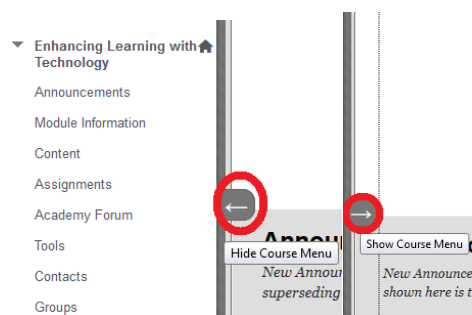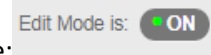

You can also collapse the course menu by clicking on the small arrow next to the course name. This brings the **Control Panel** closer to the top of the screen.
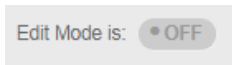

EDIT MODE

When you are inside a module **Edit Mode** is on the top right-hand side:

When **Edit Mode** is **ON**, you can edit and make changes to the module. **Edit Mode OFF** displays a student view of the module. You can still access the modules' **Control Panel** but, students cannot see this.

Edit Mode is: OFF

Edit Mode is only available to users such as Instructors and Course Builders. Students do not have access to **Edit Mode**.

STUDENT VIEW

Student View allows Instructors to experience their modules as students. So, they may take tests, submit assignments, and see links as a student, for example. This can be more accurate than turning **Edit Mode OFF**.

To view a module as a student, click on the **Enter Student Preview** icon at the top right-hand side:

To **Exit Student Preview** click on **Exit Preview** :

ARROWS

Blackboard uses arrows to offer additional options through pop-up menus. The arrows are only visible to staff when **Edit Mode** is **ON**, and are not visible to students.

SINGLE ARROWS

Single arrows offer options such as **Edit, Move,** and **Delete,** and are found in content areas, the Grade Centre and many of the interactive tools. Hover your mouse over an item for an arrow to appear and click on the arrow to see the available options:
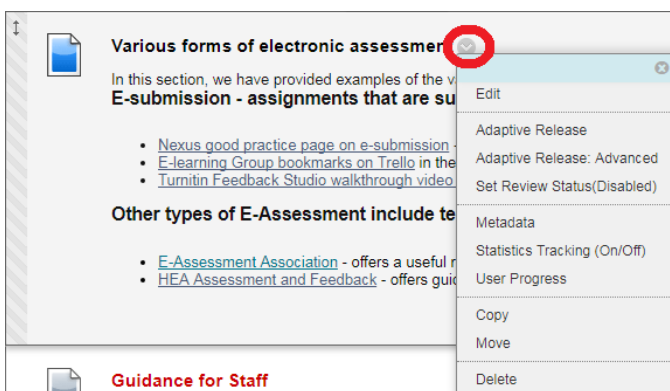
DOUBLE-HEADED ARROWS

Double-headed arrows let you drag-and-drop elements of Blackboard, so that the order of items in an area may be changed, for example. Click on a double-headed arrow to drag an item to a new position.

CONTENT AREAS

Module content areas appear as buttons or links on the course menu on the left-hand side. The AU Required Minimum Presence (RMP) applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught Blackboard modules, and requires that Blackboard modules contain:

- **Module Information** - module handbook, link to the official module description
- **Content** – study material uploaded by tutors. Typical items include lecture notes, lecture recordings, PowerPoint presentations, video clips, links, quizzes and discussion forums.
- **Assignments** - assignment briefs and links to assignment submission points.
- **Contacts -** staff profiles and contact information including email addresses and office hours.

Blackboard modules should be intuitive and logical to move around, so that items are easy to find, and materials should be grouped into distinct, manageable units. For example, if a different topic is covered each week, then all that week's materials should be accessible from one place, and not scattered in different areas of the module.

Note: If a content area contains no material it is NOT visible to students. Menu items that are hidden have a small square next to them: ![Assignments] Menu items become visible when content is added to that area.

To move around in Blackboard, click on the links. Avoid clicking the **Back** button on your browser.

To build content in a module check **Edit Mode** is **ON** and select the content area you want to add information to. Use the menus at the top of the content area to select the item you want to add, such as **Build Content**, **Item**:
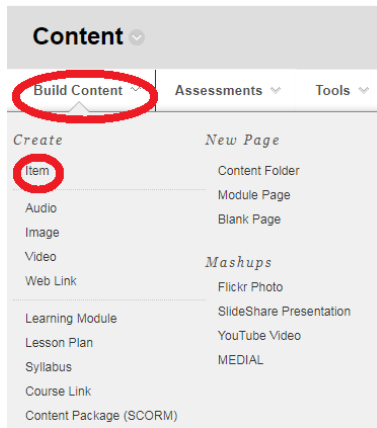
You can also create folders to organise material. Before you add content to a module, think about the structure. It may be useful to cluster items by topic so that students can see everything that relates to the topic they are studying at the time.

To add a **Content Folder** go to the content area you want to add a file to and select:

- **Build Content**
- **Content Folder,** name the folder, and click **Submit** and **OK**

To add an **Item** to a module, go to the content area you want to add a file to and select:

- **Build Content**
- **Item,** name the item, and add any text that you want to display in the text box.

To attach files, scroll down, click **Browse My Computer**, select the file you want to attach, and double-click on the file name to attach the file. You can attach as many files as you want to a single Item.
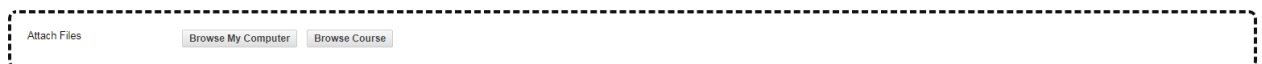

- Click on **Submit** and **OK** to upload the item to the content area.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

When **Announcements** are added to a Blackboard module they appear on the module home page. Announcements are a good way of circulating time-sensitive information to students. They can be permanent, such as a message to welcome students to a module, or can be timed to appear and disappear, if they give information about an upcoming deadline, for example.

To add an announcement go the **Control Panel**, select **Announcements**, and:
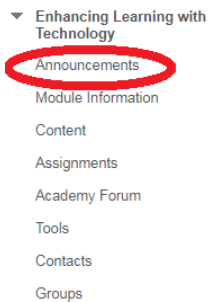
- **Select Create Announcement,** and add the subject and message of the announcement.
- Under **Web Announcement Options** either, select **Not Date Restricted**, or set the dates between which the announcement will appear.
- **Course Link** allows you to add a link to a particular section of the module. This is useful if you are announcing the addition of new material to a module.
- Click on **Submit** and **OK** and the announcement will be added to the module.

CONTACTS

Contacts allows you to create staff profiles in a Blackboard module. It can include contact information as well as links to staff web pages and a photograph, and may also be useful for publicising office hours, for example. Module Instructors may add as many profiles as desired. To create a contact:
- Under the **Control Panel**, select **Course Tools** and **Contacts.**
- Click **Create Contact.**
- Enter text into whichever boxes you want to use to add to your profile. **Note:** An **Email** address is required.

Then under **Options**:

- Select **Yes** to make the **Profile Available**, and, if desired, **Attach Image** and add a **Personal Link**, and click **Submit** and **OK**.

MASHUPS

Mashups lets you search for and add external content directly to your module, such as YouTube Videos, Flickr photos, and SlideShare Presentations.

To add a YouTube Video to a module:

- Go to the content area you want to add it to e.g. **Content.**

- Click on **Build Content**.
- Select **Mashups** and **YouTube Video**.
- Enter search terms and click **Go.**

- A list of search results will be presented. Preview a video and select the one you want to add to the module.

With the Flickr option it is possible to search for images that have permissions granted for use under a Creative Commons Licence. Where an images' creator has given public permission to reuse it freely provided the image is attributed to the original creator. You can use these without violating copyright. To restrict your search to items with a Creative Commons licence:

- Select **Mashups** and **Flickr**.
- Enter search terms and click **More Options.**

- Under **Licence**, choose the desired version of the Create Commons licence, and click **Go.**

- A list of search results will be presented, to choose one, click **Select** and **Submit** and **OK**.

GROUPS

Instructors can create students groups in Backboard that can be assigned manually, automatically, or by students signing themselves up.

Groups may be allocated their own work area that only group members and Instructors can access; and Instructors can set different assignments for each group. Further information about group work see https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Interact/Course_Groups. For instructions on how to set up groups, please see Faq 534.

LECTURE RECORDING USING PANOPTO

Aberystwyth University requires that all lectures should be recorded and made available to students. The Lecture Capture Policy, https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/regulations/lecture-capture-policy/, gives guidance about what constitutes a lecture.

Panopto software is centrally provided to enable easy in-class recording and integrates with Blackboard to help control access to recordings. Recordings may be made as lectures are given using the equipment in the lecture room or from other computers by downloading Panopto onto the machine. To make a recording of a lecture available to students:

- Record the lecture using Panopto – see Faq 681
- Link to the recording in a Blackboard module – see Faq 682

RETENTION CENTRE

The **Retention Centre** lets Instructors identify students who may have missed deadlines, or who access a Blackboard module infrequently, for example. It gives Instructors an overview of their students, and enables them to monitor and email individual students. This information is only visible to module instructors, students cannot see it.

To access the **Retention Centre** go to the **Control Panel**, **Evaluation** and **Retention Centre**:
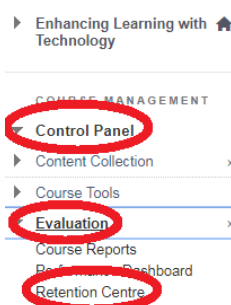
For more information about the **Retention Centre** see
https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Performance/Retention_Center

ASSIGNMENTS

The University Senate requires that all text-based assignments are received, graded and feedback returned through Blackboard, using:

- TurnItin for English-medium assignments.
- Blackboard Assignment for Welsh-medium assignments until a Welsh interface is available via TurnItin.

TurnItin enables you to run assignments through a text matching service, and provides online feedback, including audio feedback. Blackboard Assignment enables students to submit their work electronically through Blackboard and also provides the opportunity for online feedback, but not for audio feedback.

For further information about TurnItin see https://faqs.aber.ac.uk/#turnitin , and about Blackboard Assignment see https://faqs.aber.ac.uk/#blackboard Assignments

COPYING MATERIAL BETWEEN MODULES

Individual items can be moved from one area to another within the same module, or to an area in any other Blackboard module you are teaching. You will need to be an instructor on the module that you are copying content from as well as the module that you are copying content to. Please note that it is not possible to copy items linked to the **Grade Centre** or items with **adaptive release**.

In order to copy material:

- Login to the module you wish to move or copy **from** (source) and navigate to the piece of content you want to copy/move
- Click on the arrow next to the item and select **Copy** or **Move**. Selecting **Move** will delete the original item and move to its new location, selecting **Copy** will ensure the original remains.
- If you want to move or copy the item to a different module, select the desired module from the **Destination Course** menu
- Click on **Browse** to locate the folder or content area where you want to put the item. This will bring up a pop-up window containing a course map.
- Click **Expand All** to expand the map so that you can view all the subfolders. Click on a plus sign to expand just one folder.
- Click on the name of the folder where you want to put the item.
- Click **Submit** and **OK**

FURTHER INFORMATION

- **Blackboard FAQs**: http://www.inf.aber.ac.uk/advisory/faq/1

- **Turnitin FAQs**: https://faqs.aber.ac.uk/#turnitin

Getting Started with Blackboard

- **E-learning Group**: elearning@aber.ac.uk

- **Website**: www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/it-services/elearning

- **Customer Service**

  o **Phone**: 01970 622400 (Ext: 2400 from a University phone)

  o **Email**: is@aber.ac.uk

- **Online chat** on the **My Modules** page in Blackboard: