

Post-Hurricane Harvey Blackboard Information

These instructions have been created to assist any faculty who may need to use Blackboard to make up for class meetings missed because of Hurricane Harvey. This document provides instructions on how to complete the university's Blackboard training requirement, how to request a Blackboard course shell (either blank or by requesting to borrow contents from another instructor), how to provision a course, and how to get started with your new Blackboard course(s).

Step 1 – Complete Blackboard Training

All instructors who intend to use Blackboard must first complete the university's required Blackboard training, regardless of any previous experience with Blackboard or similar systems at other institutions. Our Blackboard training is fully online and can typically be completed by experienced users in approximately 2 hours and by novice users in approximately 4-6 hours. To request access to the training, please email Samantha Houston (houstonsam@uhcl.edu) and copy both Jenni Willis-Opalenik (willisopalenik@uhcl.edu) and Jenn Ray (ray@uhcl.edu) with your request. One of these Course Development & Support Team members will get you added to the training and will send you access instructions within one business day.

Step 2 – Submit Course Request(s) in OPALS

As you will learn about during the training, once trained, instructors must request new Blackboard courses using UHCL's Online Provisioning and Approvals for Learning System (OPALS). Instructors have the option to request a new blank Blackboard master course or a new master that is based upon contents copied from another instructor's existing master course. Use the links below to access video demonstrations of how to complete each of these types of course requests in OPALS:

[Video: Request a Blank Master \[6:13\]](#)

[Video: Request a Delegated Master \[7:15\]](#)

Step 3 – Provision Your Course(s)

Once your course request has been completed and your new master course created, you will need to provision a copy of that master into a semester offering, into which your students will be enrolled and from which you will teach for the remainder of the semester. The link below will take you to a video demonstration of the provisioning process and its options:

[Handout: Provisioning a Semester Offering \(PDF\)](#)

Step 4 – Building Out Your New Course

As described in the Blackboard training, Blackboard provides a wealth of tools and features that you may choose to deploy in your course(s). However, at a minimum, we recommend that you complete the following three tasks in your new course: (1) edit the placeholder item for faculty to serve as your welcome message or getting started instructions for students, (2) use Blackboard's File tool to provide an electronic copy of your syllabus to students, and deploy and use the Announcements tool. Please use the links below to access a handout and/or video that demonstrates how to complete these basic procedures:

[Handout: Post-Disaster Blackboard Basics](#)

[Video: Post-Disaster Blackboard Basics \[9:44\]](#)

We strongly encourage faculty to create and use videos in their courses, but we request that you work with your designated Instructional Designer (ID) to deploy those files in your course. Directly uploading MP4 and similar video files into Blackboard can create access problems for students, slow down the performance of your course, and can even slow down the university's Blackboard system as a whole. Our staff can deploy your video files in such a way that avoids these issues and we can typically do so within 1-2 business days from when you request our assistance. The following Blackboard tutorial videos provide demonstrations of how to use these features.

[Video: Adding Videos \[5:43\]](#)

In addition to content options, many faculty opt to use the Assignment tool (also known as a drop box), Test tool, and Discussions (or a similar interactivity tool) to support their classes. Demonstrations of how to deploy these tools in your course are available via the following tutorial videos:

[Video: Creating an Assignment \(with or without the SafeAssign Option\) \[4:43\]](#)

[Video: Creating a Test \[4:47\]](#)

[Video: Creating a Discussion \[4:34\]](#)

Step 5 – Teaching Your Course with Blackboard

Once you have provisioned your course(s), you should have access to it/them in 4-6 hours. However, it can take up to 48 hours before all enrolled students will have access. Students enrollments are processed between PeopleSoft/E-Services and Blackboard, via OPALS in small, automated batch jobs and those processes cannot be manually expedited, so please plan on a 48-hour delay between provisioning and full student access.

Step 6 – Blackboard- and OPALS-related Assistance

The Instructional Design (ID) members of UCT's Course Development & Support Team are available to provide further technical assistance as you prepare to and begin using Blackboard to support your teaching at UHCL. We have a designated ID to support faculty from each of the university's four colleges, as listed below:

College of Business

Candace Lehew
lehew@uhcl.edu
281-283-2934

College of Human Sciences and Humanities

Henry Newkirk
newkirk@uhcl.edu
281-283-2914

College of Education

Alex Nguyen
nguyent@uhcl.edu
281-283-2922

College of Science and Engineering

Amanda Bruce
bruce@uhcl.edu
281-283-2933

The fastest way to reach a member of our team is through the email address provided above or by contacting the Support Center, either at supportcenter@uhcl.edu or 281-283-2828. If you contact the Support Center, someone will enter your information and request into the help ticketing system and it will be routed to your designated Instructional Designer (ID) or a member of the ID team in the order in which it was received.