



System and Internet Requirements and General Information for Online Learning with Blackboard

System Requirements

For success in working with the Blackboard Learning Management System, please use the following minimum hardware and software requirements that are necessary to access an online course and host an online synchronous learning session.

System/Browser, Plugins and Players Requirements

| | Minimum | Recommended |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Operating System | Windows Vista, 7, or 8 Mac OSX 10.6, 10.7, 10.8, or 10.9 | Windows 7 or 8 Mac OSX 10.7, 10.8, or 10.9 |
| Processor | 1 GHz processor | 2 GHz or faster processor |
| Memory | 512 MB of RAM | 2 GB of RAM or higher |
| Monitor Resolution | 1024 x 768 | 1024 x 768 or higher |
| Free Hard Disk Space | 5 GB of free disk space | 20 GB or higher of free space |
| Internet Connection | Broadband (high-speed) Internet connection with a consistent minimum speed of 1.5 Mbps. | Broadband (high-speed) Internet connection with a speed of 4 Mbps or higher |
| Internet Browser | Safari 4+, Chrome or Firefox | Safari 4+, Chrome (<i>preferred</i>) or Firefox |
| Java | Java is required to use Blackboard. Download Java. Visit Java's support page for information about troubleshooting Java. | |

For success, students and instructors must have regular, reliable access to a computer with a stable broadband Internet connection. Computer must have access to a microphone (headsets work well) and a camera, if possible. Any system older than 4 years may not have the processing power to work with the current version of Blackboard and its components.

If your computer is publicly accessed (like in a library) you may be prohibited from downloading files or software.

Mobile Devices

Blackboard Mobile Learn is available for Android devices, BlackBerry smartphone devices, HP web OS devices, and iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad. Instructors may access their courses but may not host Collaborate synchronous learning sessions through Blackboard Mobile.

For mobile devices, please visit the [Blackboard Mobile App](#) webpage to download the app for Android and Apple mobile devices.

Operating System

Blackboard was designed to work on Windows and Macintosh based systems. At this time, Linux is not a supported operating system with Blackboard.

Please note, while the minimum allowed Windows operating system is Windows XP, students are strongly advised to use a newer operating system for Windows machines (i.e. Windows Vista or Windows 7).

Processor Speed

The processor (or CPU) is the brain of your computer. Much like a human brain, it tells the computer what to do and when to do it. The speed of your processor is determined by how many commands it can perform in a given second and is measured in hertz (Hz). The higher your processing speed, the faster your computer is able to execute commands.

Because the Blackboard environment is interactive and contains a mixture of media (videos, slideshows, exams, etc.), you need at least a 1 GHz (1 GHz = 1,000,000,000 Hz) processor to handle these operations. Most new computers come with at least 2 Ghz installed out of the box.

Memory

Your computer's memory is the temporary storage place for commands and information. When your computer is processing information, part of that data is stored in the memory to be accessed later. This allows the computer to quickly retrieve that information which helps your computer run faster.

When your memory gets filled up, your computer will begin storing this temporary information in a file on your hard drive. When the computer has to access this temporary data from the hard drive, it can slow down your system because it is faster for your computer to read this information from memory than to read it from the hard drive. The more RAM (random-access memory) you have, the faster your computer can access this temporary information.

Internet Connection

To function properly, Blackboard requires a consistent high-speed Internet connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband, T1, etc.). The minimum Internet connection speed to access Blackboard is a consistent 1.5 Mbps (megabits per second) or higher. You can check your speed settings using the [speed test on this website](#).

Note: “Consistent” means that your connection does not fall below 1.5 Mbps during regular usage. If your speed is slower than 1.5 Mbps, you may need to find an alternative way to access the Internet either by finding a different Internet service provider or using the wireless connection at a public facility.

Internet Browser

The first step to see if your computer is set up for Blackboard is to check your browser compatibility. We strongly recommend Blackboard students use the latest version of Google Chrome for Windows or Mac because it is the most compatible with our current Blackboard system.

| Browser Downloads | PC | Mac |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Google Chrome | Download | Download |
| Firefox | Download | Download |

Generally, it is a good idea to have multiple browsers installed on your system for a couple of reasons. First, you always want a plan B. If you are trying to perform time sensitive tasks in Blackboard, you don't want to waste time troubleshooting your browser or downloading a new browser. Having multiple browsers already installed allows you to quickly switch to a different browser when you have a browser related issue.

Second, it helps to rule out browser related issues. If you are having problems in one browser and not another, then you know there is something going on with your browser or its settings. If you are having the same problem in multiple browsers, then you'll know that it is either a system issue or something related to Blackboard.

Important Note:

We recommend that students and instructors *do not* use Internet Explorer with Blackboard due to the security and other features that interact negatively with the system. If you need assistance with your Internet browser, see below for troubleshooting common browser problems.

Java

Java is a programming language and software platform that is required for certain features of Blackboard to function properly (similar to Flash). *Some of the important features of Blackboard which use Java include assessments, surveys, discussions, file uploading, and downloading.* Java is a programming language and software platform, similar to Flash, that is required for certain features of Blackboard to function properly. Some of the important features of Blackboard which use Java include:

- File uploading and downloading
- Taking assessments and surveys
- The visual text editor box found in Discussion, Assessments, the Assignment Dropbox, etc.
- Logging in to the Blackboard Learning System

To learn more about Java including installation instructions, verification procedures and troubleshooting tips, please see below or go to the [Java website](#).

| | PC | MAC |
|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Verifying Java | Instructions | Instructions |
| Installing Java | Instructions | Instructions |
| Uninstalling Java | Instructions | n/a |
| Updating Java | Instructions | Instructions |

Updating Java on Macintosh Systems

Apple supplies their own version of Java for all operating systems prior to OS X 10.7 Lion. For Macintosh operating systems prior to Lion, use the [Software Update](#) feature (available through the Apple menu) to check for Java updates. If you have problems with Java on your Macintosh system, please contact [Apple Technical Support](#) for further assistance.

Additional Software and Plug-ins

Most of the materials you will be accessing in Blackboard will consist of web pages, Microsoft documents or Adobe Acrobat files. However, instructors may choose to upload content in a variety of formats. Below you will find a list of common file types that may be used in Blackboard. The software required to view these files is given and links to downloadable versions of the software have been provided if available.

| Application Downloads | File Extensions | PC | Mac |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| WinZip | .zip • .rar • etc. | Download | n/a |
| WinRAR | .rar • .zip • etc. | Download | Download |
| Adobe Acrobat Reader | .pdf | Download | Download |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Open Office | .doc • .docx .ppt • .pptx .xls • .xlsx .rtf • .txt | Download | Download |
| Microsoft Office | .doc • .docx .ppt • .pptx .xls • .xlsx .rtf • .txt | Download | Download |
| Microsoft Office Viewers | | | |
| Word Viewer | .doc • .docx | Download | n/a |
| PowerPoint Viewer | .ppt • .pptx | Download | n/a |
| Excel Viewer | .xls • .xlsx | Download | n/a |

| Video Players | Common File Extensions | PC | Mac |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Macromedia Shockwave Player | .fla • .swa • .swf | Download | Download |
| QuickTime | .mov • .qt | Download | Download |
| Media Player Classic | .avi • .vlc • .wmv | Download | n/a |
| VLC Media Player | .avi • .vlc • .wmv | Download | Download |

| Additional Software | PC | Mac |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| Microsoft Security Essentials | Download | n/a |
| Ad-Aware Spyware Removal | Download | n/a |
| SpyBot Search and Destroy | Download | n/a |

Additional System Requirements - Instructors

- Consistent hard wired (if possible), high speed, broadband internet connection
- Camera
- Headset with microphone
- Latest version of Chrome 55.0.2883.87 (necessary for Collaborate synchronous sessions)

Recommended Browser Plugins and Players:

- Adobe Reader (PDF Viewer)
- Adobe Flash Player
- Microsoft Silverlight
- Microsoft Viewers (Excel, Word, PowerPoint)
- Windows Media Player
- RealPlayer
- Apple Quicktime
- Sun Java

Brower Information

Recommended Browser Configurations

- Enable Javascript for your browser
- Enable Cookies for your browser
- Enable Popup Windows for your browser

Browser Compatibility

Most problems in Blackboard arise from incompatibility issues with your browser or software on your computer.

Recommended Browser

We strongly recommend that Blackboard instructors and students use the latest version of [Google Chrome](#) for Windows or Mac because it is the most compatible with our current Blackboard system.

Browser Compatibility Check

The first step to see if your computer is set up for Blackboard is to check your browser compatibility: https://en-us.help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Getting_Started/Browser_Support/Browser_Checker

The Blackboard browser check will check the following configurations:

- **Browser Check:** Checks to see if the browser you are using is validated for use with Blackboard. At this time, we only support browsers that are **Compatible** or **Certified**.
- **JavaScript Check:** Almost every part of the Learning System relies on JavaScript for the ability to generate interactive web pages. You must have JavaScript enabled.
- **Cookies Check:** Makes sure your browser is configured to allow cookies, small bits of data Blackboard stores on your computer.
- **Pop-up Blocker:** The Learning System sometimes uses small browser windows to deliver requested content.
- **Port 80 Check:** Port 80 is your standard Internet port and its how information enters your computer from Blackboard.
- **Java Check:** Checks to make sure Java is installed on your system.
- **PDF Check:** Verifies that you can open Adobe Acrobat files.

Pay attention to any warnings that indicate potential compatibility issues. You will see a check mark for every test that you pass. If you see a failure message, you may need to update your settings.

Common Browser Issues

The following information may help you troubleshoot some of the more common browser-related problems that you may encounter while working inside of Blackboard.

Make sure that cookies from third parties are allowed.

Third party cookies are allowed by default on all supported browsers. If you experience problems staying logged in to Blackboard, please check your browser settings to make sure you allow third party cookies. For more information on enabling cookies, please select your current web browser:

- [Mozilla Firefox](#)
- [Internet Explorer](#)
- [Safari](#)
- [Google Chrome](#)

Make sure that JavaScript is enabled in the browser.

JavaScript is enabled by default in all supported browsers. JavaScript is a type of programming language used to provide immediate feedback to users via the browser. Much of the Blackboard system relies on JavaScript to generate interactive web pages. For more information on enabling JavaScript on your machine, please select your current web browser:

- [Mozilla Firefox](#)
- [Internet Explorer](#)
- [Safari](#)
- [Google Chrome](#)

Pop-Up Blocker

Pop-up blockers work in the background while you browse the Internet. When they detect a pop-up window that may be an unwanted advertisement, they automatically close the window. This can prevent Blackboard from performing properly.

While using Blackboard, if you are unable to view discussion postings, quiz windows, and download links, then you need to disable pop-up blocking for your Blackboard server. For more information about turning off pop-up blocker on your machine, please select your current web browser:

- [Mozilla Firefox](#)
- [Internet Explorer](#)
- [Safari](#)
- [Google Chrome](#)

Internet History and Cache

Your Internet browser keeps a record of all the websites you visit in its **History**. Your Internet cache acts as a roadmap for all the web sites you visit by storing copies of these sites locally on your computer. Because this site information is stored locally, web sites load faster.

Sometimes, this stored data can create problems for Blackboard users trying to login to the system. If you are experiencing “Session Already Running” errors or are unable to view certain web content, try clearing your Internet history and/or cache. For more information on clearing your Internet history and cache, please select your current web browser:

- Mozilla Firefox [History](#) and [Cache](#)
- Internet Explorer [History Cache](#)
- Safari [History](#) and [Cache](#)
- Google Chrome [History](#) and [Cache](#)

General Information

How to Login

Blackboard is a web-based course management software used by instructors to build and manage their online classes. Blackboard can be accessed at <http://www.uwsi.org>
Blackboard LOG-IN is at the top menu of the page.

How to Change Your Password

After you log in, you can change your password. We recommend that you change your password periodically to ensure security. Don't use common personal information as your password, such as your name.

Passwords are case-sensitive, must not contain spaces, and must be at least one character.

If you see your name in the upper-right corner of your window, select the arrow to access the menu. You can change your password from the Personal Information link.

Settings > Personal Information > Change Password