

2025

## Privacy, Safety & Security of Data: Acceptable Use Policy for Distance Education



### **Mission**

To provide students the opportunity to develop national workplace competencies to fill the needs of business and industry.

### **Vision**

To be our communities' first choice for workforce education.

## **Clearwater Campus**

Angela Wright-Nash  
PCSB



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*Updated: April 7, 2025*

# Privacy, Safety & Security of Data

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## Introduction

The information technology (IT) staff of the Pinellas County School Board (PCSB) and Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus (PTC-CLWTR) possesses credentials in the following areas: server infrastructure, desktop infrastructure, private cloud, enterprise devices and apps, data platforms, business intelligence, messaging, communication, and the Blackboard Learn system. This expertise enables them to implement best practices in technology infrastructure and ensure the security of institutional data.

## Data Storage & Network Access

The Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus (PTC-CLWTR) IT Department manages all staff and student access to the distance learning management systems. They work closely with the Pinellas County School Board (PCSB) IT staff to ensure that PTC-CLWTR is operating with a safe and adequate infrastructure.

PTC-CLWTR employees and students are provided with credentials to access the PTC-CLWTR and PCSB networks and are provided server space to store digital materials. When an employee is no longer a staff member or when a student is no longer enrolled, their access to the server and network is revoked.

## Privacy, Safety, & Security Application and User Security

*User Authentication:* User data on our database is logically segregated by account-based access rules. User accounts have unique usernames and passwords that must be entered each time a user accesses the system.

*User Passwords:* User application passwords have minimum complexity requirements.

*Data Encryption:* Certain sensitive user data, such as account passwords, are stored in encrypted format.

## Physical Security

The distance education infrastructure required for the learning management system (LMS) is provided as part of the agreement with the vendor who supplies the LMS to Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus (PTC-CLWTR) on a multi-year contractual basis. This off-site infrastructure includes the servers, security, storage (including archival storage), and support, as set forth in the detailed master agreement of all products and services, located at <http://agreements.blackboard.com/bbinc/blackboard-new-master-agreement-all-products.aspx>.

*Data centers:* PTC's distance education information systems infrastructure (servers, networking equipment, etc.) for the learning management system is maintained in a server facility off-site (may be one of various locations throughout the United States), due to our managed hosting/SaaS system configuration. Some limited use servers are secured at the district level and are housed at the Pinellas County School Board's secure datacenter, where they are monitored and maintained by Pinellas County School Board district staff.

*Data Center Security:* The Pinellas County School Board's data center is surveilled 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Access is fully secured with district security entry requirements.

*Environmental Controls:* All Pinellas County School Board and Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus information technology dedicated data storage facilities are maintained at controlled temperatures and humidity ranges which are continuously monitored for variations. Smoke and fire detection, and response systems are in place. Distance education data is housed in a secure data facility in Virginia, due to our managed hosting/SaaS configuration, and is maintained under the same strict conditions as those provided by the district.

*Back-Ups:* Back-Ups are performed daily at the off-site storage facility provided through our managed hosting/SaaS solution. All back-ups have storage on and off-site. On-site back-ups are performed on an annual basis.

## **Responsibilities of Institution**

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### **Introduction**

The information technology (IT), instructional and administrative staff members of Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus (PTC-CLWTR) hold credentials in those areas of expertise that determine their responsibility to ensure the quality of distance education offered by the institution.

### **IT Staff Responsibility**

The Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus IT Department will maintain equipment designated for student use, will provide support to the network (local and district), and will work with the Pinellas County Schools staff to ensure access to resources. They will communicate periods of down time, and will provide appropriate technical support at all levels, as requested through instructional faculty. The IT staff for PTC-CLWTR also assumes responsibility for verifying and maintaining the currency and quality of all contracted courseware, on both an annual and ongoing basis, as well as maintaining curriculum oversight responsibility – in partnership with PTC-CLWTR faculty and administration – within all contracts.

### **Instructional Faculty Responsibility**

The Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus instructional faculty members will provide access to high-quality distance education curriculum that is aligned to state and industry standards. They will provide initial training on the use of the learning management system (LMS), through an introduction and orientation to the LMS during campus orientation, providing resources for use of the LMS, and by specific familiarization with LMS features and content relevant to the enrolled course. The institution ensures timeliness of its responses (synchronously or asynchronously) to students' requests by placing a requirement on response time of no more than 24 hours. Each course/program uses a standardized template within the LMS, course descriptions and learning objectives, course requirements (e.g., standard syllabus, outcomes, grading policy, content resources, etc.), and learning outcomes in order to ensure the quality and assessment of student academic performance. The curriculum will be reviewed by an advisory panel of industry members and will use instructional materials that represent up-to-date and relevant theory within the discipline. Courses will be continually evaluated, both by the instructors and by administrators, to ensure that the elements of high-quality and standards-aligned online coursework are in place.

### **Responsibility of Administration**

The Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus administration will review distance education courses for content and structure regularly, ensuring that courses delivered via an online instructional format are identical to those taught traditionally, regarding:

- quality and rigor,
- depth of academic and technical standards,
- completion requirements, and
- credentials awarded.

They will communicate expectations for quality to instructors, participate in advisory meetings, and address student concerns as they related to distance education needs, in an impartial fashion.

# Acceptable Use Policy

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## Introduction

This document sets forth the policy of acceptable use by users of the learning management system utilized by Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus ("PTC-CLWTR"). Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus currently uses Blackboard Learn+™ as its learning management system ("LMS"), and this policy should be read in conjunction with the [Blackboard Terms of Use](#). All users, including, but not limited to, students, teachers, school administrators, and educational organizations, are subject to this policy and are expected to comply with its provisions.

## User Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of any person using the learning management system (LMS) to read, understand, and comply with this policy. Any person with questions regarding the meaning of the policy, or application of this policy in a particular context, should seek clarification from their instructor, their administrator, and/or the LMS administrator for Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus at [wright-nasha@pcsb.org](mailto:wright-nasha@pcsb.org). Use of the LMS shall constitute acceptance of the terms of this policy.

## Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses

The learning management system (LMS) is available only for educational purposes. Users may not use the LMS to store any files that are not educational.

It is unacceptable for users to use the LMS for:

- furthering any political or religious purpose;
- engaging in any commercial or fundraising purpose;
- sending or posting threatening, harassing, or disparaging messages or content to or regarding an individual or group of people;
- gaining unauthorized access to computer or telecommunications networks;
- interfering with the operations of technology resources, including placing a computer virus on any computer system, including Blackboard Learn;
- accessing or sharing sexually explicit, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate materials;
- intercepting communications intended for other persons;
- attempting to gain unauthorized access to Blackboard Learn;
- logging in through another person's account or attempting to access another user's password or files;
- sending defamatory or libelous material concerning a person or group of people;
- furthering any criminal or illegal act, including downloading, uploading, or distributing any files, software, or other material in violation of federal copyright laws;
- infringing on any intellectual property rights; or
- downloading, uploading, or distributing any files, software, or other material that is not specifically related to an educational project.

The LMS may not be used to transmit or store messages or other data that are prohibited or inappropriate under this policy. Users may not create, send, or store messages or other data or content that are considered offensive, contain sexually explicit material, or otherwise offensively address the

age, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability of a person or a group of people. Users also may not create, send, or store messages pertaining to dangerous devices such as weaponry or explosive devices. Users should take all reasonable precautions against receiving or downloading messages, images, or other data of this sort.

## Expectations Regarding Academic Integrity

Enrolled users will participate and submit required assignments as requested or required. The assignments submitted by users will represent their own work, or, where the work is not their own, the work of sources that are appropriately credited. Any user who is found to have submitted work that is not his or her own, either in whole or in part, and that has failed to credit the source, may be subject to one or more penalties. Penalties may range from warning, to loss of credit for the assignment, to failure of the course, dependent upon the nature and severity of the act or omission.

## No Expectation of Privacy

Use of the learning management system (LMS) constitutes consent for administrators to monitor and/or inspect any files that users create, any messages they post or receive, and any web sites they access. PTC-CLWTR may inspect any user's account and the files it contains at any time. PTC-CLWTR also has the right to give permission to teachers, school administrators, law enforcement officials, and others, as appropriate, to review the LMS to determine the online activities of a user who PTC-CLWTR has reason to believe may be in violation of this policy. Users are advised that messages in discussion forums, including deleted messages, are regularly archived and can be retrieved. In addition, an Internet firewall automatically checks all data moving between the local area network and the Internet and logs the sending and receiving destinations.

## Passwords

Each user shall be required to either create a secure password or maintain the administrator-assigned password in a manner directed by the LMS vendor and shall use and maintain the password as directed by the same and set forth in this policy. This password is to be used to access the LMS computer network and any resources that reside within the network and require password access. LMS users are expected to keep their passwords confidential and are responsible for all activity under their accounts. If a user suspects their password has been compromised, they must notify their instructor, who will notify the LMS administrator.

## Violations

Failure to comply with this policy may subject a user to termination of the user's LMS account. PTC-CLWTR will notify school or organization administrators of any inappropriate activities. It will also advise law enforcement agencies of activities conducted through the LMS which PTC-CLWTR believes may be illegal. PTC-CLWTR will cooperate fully with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation related to illegal activities conducted through the LMS.

## Disclaimers

Pinellas Technical College makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, for LMS services and resources. PTC-CLWTR is not responsible for any damages incurred, including, but not limited to: loss of data resulting from delays or interruption of service, loss of data stored on the LMS, or damage to personal property used to access LMS resources; the accuracy, nature, or quality of information stored on LMS resources or gathered through the LMS or the Internet; or unauthorized financial obligations incurred through LMS-provided access. Further, even though PTC-CLWTR may use technical or manual means to limit user access, these limits do not provide a foolproof means for enforcing the provisions of this policy. All provisions of this agreement are subordinate to local, state and federal laws.



# **Authentication of Academic Submissions & Examinations**

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## **Introduction**

Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus has several systems in place to ensure that academic submissions received from and examinations administered to students are completed by the same student who has registered for that course or program of study. Students are required to agree, in writing, to standards of academic integrity and to adhere to specific codes of student conduct; in addition, all students of Pinellas County Schools are required to sign an agreement for Network/Internet Acceptable Use, prior to being permitted access to any electronic resources.

## **Processes Used to Ensure Authentication**

When students register as students at Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus (PTC-CLWTR) and enroll in one of the many programs offered, they are registered by the school's guidance professionals and enrolled in the student information system (SIS) by the student records specialist. They are required to provide two forms of official identification, to establish identity and proof of residence, in order to register. When they are enrolled in the program, in the SIS, they are provided with a unique student identification number. Students are further enrolled in their distance education/learning management system (LMS) programs by the LMS administrator, using a report created solely for this purpose in the SIS. The report is generated in the SIS and uses the same information from the SIS used for registration and enrollment, including the unique student identification number. A unique username and password combination is established for each student, which is provided to the program instructor for distribution to students in the enrolled cohort. Usernames are unique and cannot be changed once created; passwords are irretrievable and must be reset if/when necessary. Students are advised in orientation, and during introduction to the LMS, that log-in credentials are to be kept confidential and sharing of log-in information may be a violation of academic integrity. All student activity in the LMS is continually monitored by faculty, as well as by administration, in addition to reports being provided by the LMS administrator upon request; this information includes log-in time, log-in frequency, course activity, coursework submission activity, confirmation of student time online, and percentage of coursework completed, in addition to any other relevant or requested data.

## **Off-Site Exam Administration**

When online students are required to take tests at a location other than at a Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus campus location, distance education instructional personnel have several options for securing the test, including:

- Requiring the use of a separate password to access the examination
- Timing the exam
- Setting the exam to “turn on” and “turn off” within specific time frames
- Randomizing questions for each re-examination
- Limiting the location where the exam can be taken, based upon the IP address

## On-Site Exam Proctoring

For added security, distance education instructional personnel also schedule on-site exams for students, and secure testing locations for those students to test when they arrive on-campus. In addition, there are testing centers on campus that have been established for specific industry certification testing purposes with certified proctors, to ensure the validity and authentication of such examinations, as required by the testing bodies. Students must schedule these tests in advance, and present valid photo identification before being permitted to test.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Sample Student Contract



## Online-Hybrid Student Contract

To be an online/hybrid/campus-based student at PTC, you must agree to the following rules:

1. As an **online** student I hereby agree that I will log into the PTC LMS system Monday through Friday (or as designated by the student calendar). By doing this, I will receive 5 hours of attendance credit per day. If I log in less than 5 days per week, my time will be reduced by 5 hours for every day I do not log in.
2. As a **hybrid** student I am aware that my program is a combination of online and face-to-face instruction; I agree to be on campus for instruction for a minimum of 51 percent of my attendance, and more if requested by my instructor.
3. I understand that I must maintain minimum attendance each week, as stated in the campus catalog and my financial aid provider. After six (6) consecutive absences I may be removed from the program. I am also aware that an employer will expect 100% attendance each week on the job; therefore, I will work to form the habit of 100% attendance.
4. **Please Note:** On the last day of each month that school is in session and on the last day of the term, I will log on before noon or will be marked absent because attendance must be submitted before the end of the school day for that month or term.
5. I will maintain academic progress per term as required by PTC to be in good standing. I understand that I must maintain minimum academic progress each week as stated in the student handbook and my financial aid provider. I am also aware that an employer will expect 100% performance on the job; therefore, I will work to form the habit of 100% academic progress.
6. I will submit assignments WEEKLY. Weekly assignments will be submitted each week either to my instructor or via Blackboard. I will submit assignments that are equivalent to the 25-hour week that any PTC student is obligated to work within.
7. I will read my email/course mail daily and respond as required in a timely manner. Instructors communicate on a regular basis using email/course mail. I am responsible for knowing the information relayed to me in these messages.
8. As an **online/hybrid** student I will obtain access to or purchase the software required for the program in which I am enrolled.

Failure to meet any of the above requirements for distance learning will result in my termination as an **online/hybrid** student. To continue in the program, I will be required to attend class on the PTC campus Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. (normal class hours).

All Certification exams must be taken and completed prior to a student's completion date or graduation from the program. NO certification exams shall be provided to any student after that date.

**I hereby fully understand and agree to the above requirements.**

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B: Sample Academic Integrity Statement



# Academic Integrity Statement

Every student at Pinellas Technical College will adhere to the academic integrity policy outlined below. Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action and may jeopardize the student's continuation in the course and any award of academic credit.

Each student will agree to abide by the following rules of academic integrity:

1. Your work on each assignment will be completely your own.
2. Your instructor must approve or assign any collaboration with another classmate on assignments and/or projects.
3. You will not practice plagiarism in any form.
4. You will not allow others to copy your work.
5. You will not misuse content from the Internet.
6. You will not share your log-in credentials (username and/or password) for any academic site with any other individual.
7. You will not use the log-in credentials of someone else (username and/or password) to access any academic site.

Plagiarism is copying or using ideas or words (from another online classmate, or an Internet or print source) and presenting them as your own.

Remember that all instructors use several methods to check for authenticity. If an instructor confirms that a student has violated academic integrity, the student will be subject to consequences determined by the Code of Student Conduct for Postsecondary Career, Technical & Adult Education.

I hereby agree to abide by the rules of academic integrity as stated above.

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Print Your Full Name Above

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Sign Your Full Name Above

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Date

## APPENDIX C: PCS Network/Internet Acceptable Use Agreement Form

### PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS NETWORK/INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT

Pinellas County Schools use computers to support learning and to enhance instruction. Computer networks in the schools allow students and staff to interact with many computers. The Internet, a network of networks, allows people to interact with hundreds of thousands of networks and computers. Internet access is now available to designated students in Pinellas County Schools. This resource offers vast, diverse, and unique resources to students that will allow them to communicate with people from around the world, visit electronic libraries, perform research on a variety of subjects, and participate in special projects with students from all points on the globe. The goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence in schools by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. This technology will benefit all students as they prepare for work in a global marketplace.

The student is expected to follow all guidelines stated below, as well as those given orally by the staff, and to demonstrate ethical behavior that is of the highest order in using the network facilities at the school.

#### **1. Acceptable Use**

The purpose of the Internet is to facilitate communications in support of research and education by providing access to unique resources and the opportunity for collaborative work. The use of the student's account must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of Pinellas County Schools. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. Use for commercial activities is generally not acceptable. Use for product advertisement is also prohibited.

#### **2. Privileges**

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. The districtwide network system administrator is the supervisor of distributive and user support systems. In addition, the principal will appoint a staff member to act as the school's network system administrator. Students may not allow others to use their account name or their password. Violation of this rule could jeopardize access to the Internet and students who violate this rule will immediately lose all network and computer access. The school's network system administrators will deem what is inappropriate use and their decision is final. Also, the school's network system administrators may close or restrict an account at any time as required. The administration and staff of the district or the school may also request the districtwide network system administrator or the school's network system administrator to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user access.

#### **3. Network Etiquette**

Students are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Do not reveal personal address, phone numbers, or other personal information of yourself or classmates.
- b. Be polite. Do not get abusive in messages to others.
- c. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language.
- d. Do not engage in activities that are prohibited under state or federal law.
- e. Do not assume that electronic mail is private. People who operate the system do have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
- f. Do not use the network in such a way that would disrupt the use of the network by other users.
- g. All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property.

#### **4. Services**

- a. Pinellas County Schools will not be responsible for any charges related to fee for service access to on-line resources services incurred by account holders without prior written approval being received from the district.
- b. Pinellas County Schools makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. Pinellas County Schools will not be responsible for any damages suffered. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its own negligence or errors or omissions including any and all viruses. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the student's own risk. Pinellas County Schools specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

### 5. Security

Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If the student can identify a security problem, the student must notify the school's network system administrator or the Pinellas County Schools districtwide network system administrator and should not demonstrate the problem to other users. Attempts to logon to the Internet as a network system administrator will result in cancellation of user privileges. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the Internet.

### 6. Vandalism

Vandalism will result in cancellation of Internet privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, Internet, or any of the above listed agencies or other networks that are connected to Pinellas County Schools. This includes, but is not limited to the uploading or creation of computer viruses.

### STUDENT

I understand and will abide by the Network and Internet Use Agreement. I further understand that any violation of the regulations stated is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked and school disciplinary and appropriate legal action may be taken.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_


### PARENT OR GUARDIAN

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Network and Internet Use Agreement. I understand that my child's access is designed for educational purposes. I recognize it is impossible for Pinellas County Schools to restrict access to all controversial or offensive materials and I will not hold them responsible for materials acquired on the network. Further, I accept full responsibility for the supervision, if any, when my child's use is not in a school setting. I have read and understand the information in this agreement and hereby give my permission for my child to use the Internet pursuant to the terms of this agreement.


Parent or Guardian's Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

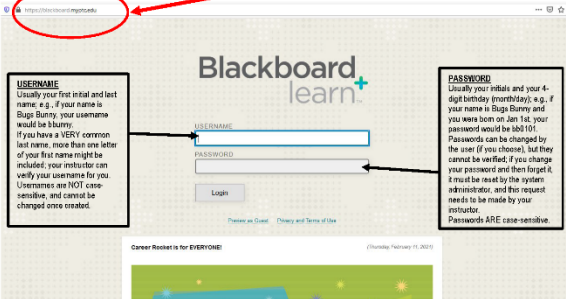
## APPENDIX D: Student Orientation to LMS



Welcome to  
Distance Education  
**@PTC**



The URL for the Blackboard (Bb) Learn+™ Learning Management System (LMS) is  
<https://blackboard.mvptc.edu>



**USERNAME**  
Usually your first initial and last name e.g., if your name is Bugs Bunny, your username would be lbunny. If you have a VERY common last name, more than one letter of your first name might be included, your instructor can verify your username for you. Usernames are NOT case-sensitive, and cannot be changed once created.

**PASSWORD**  
Usually your initials and your 4-digit birthday (month/day); e.g., if your name is Bugs Bunny and you were born on Jan 1st, your password would be lb0101. Passwords can be changed by the user (if you choose), but they cannot be verified, if you change your password and then forget it, it must be reset by the system administrator, and this request needs to be made by your instructor. Passwords ARE case-sensitive.

(Before you log in, you can scroll down to read announcements on the portal page if you like.)

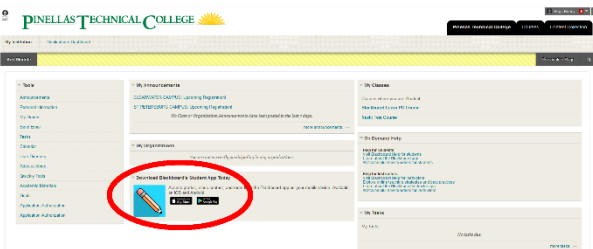
**IMPORTANT:** Usernames and passwords are not to be shared. It is understood, and a matter of academic honesty and personal integrity, that you will safeguard your log-in credentials.

**Each Blackboard Learn+™ account is for the use of the student to which it has been assigned, and only for the use of that student.**

Distance Education@PTC

Blackboard

The first thing you'll see after log-in ...



### Breaking it Down:

- Inside that big, bold red circle? You can download a **Student App** for Blackboard, which will allow you to stay connected on your smart device! Keep up with assignment deadlines, course calendars, announcements, class communication, and your grades.
- Tabs along the top-right... When you log in, you are on the **Pinellas Technical College** tab (we'll look at the other two later). It's an overview of your Bb account, and gives you easy access to **Tools** (on the left side), **Announcements** (top-center), your **Classes** (top-right), and **On Demand Help** (under the Classes).
- If you are involved in any student **Organizations** that use Bb, they will be under Announcements.
- If/when you have **Tasks** due, they are under the **On Demand Help** area.
- At the VERY top-right of the screen, you'll see your name – you can access your account details and settings, and open a menu, by clicking your name.
- Most things provide a clickable link to take you somewhere else.

You will use the same Username/Password to log into the Student App that you use to log into Bb on a desktop computer/laptop. Blackboard is available to you from any place that you have an internet connection with a browser; you CAN use a browser on your smartphone or tablet to run the full version of the program, but it will be difficult to see all the features (it has not been programmed to be responsive to the smaller screen format, since there's an app available). You will need to scroll, and/or turn your device to a landscape orientation to see some items or tabs.

Blackboard Learn+™ seems to exhibit its best performance in the Google Chrome browser environment; however, it will perform in other browsers, although occasionally with some issues. If you have a problem seeing something that should be there, try switching browsers and see if that solves your problem.

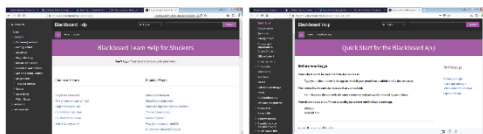
### Getting Help

This document (the one you are reading) is a **very** general overview of Blackboard and its features; for specific questions about the course you are in, your first resource is always your instructor. For this reason, when you have an issue (even if it seems like a technical issue), always follow the following protocol for getting help:

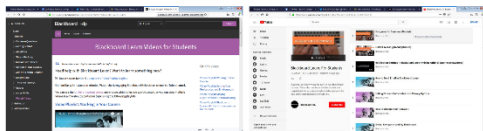
- Go to the **On Demand Help** area on the **Pinellas Technical College** tab, and use the **Help for Students** resources – OR click **Help** on your class menu, and search to see if you can find an answer to your question. If that doesn't work, then ...
- Reach out to your instructor. If your instructor cannot solve your problem, then they will contact the **Bb Administrator** to escalate your issue for you. If you attempt to circumvent your instructor by contacting the Bb Admin directly, you will be referred back to your instructor, since most issues are connected to the content settings and not Bb itself.

### Using the On Demand Help for Students links

There are three links under **Help for Students**, all of which will direct you to <https://help.blackboard.com/learn/Student>. At this site, you will find plenty of how-to information regarding how to use the Blackboard Learn+™ learning management system (LMS). The first link is to subject matter is searchable by issue or topic; the second link is for assistance with the Bb App.



There are links to videos, which are housed on YouTube. PTC is using the "Original" course view – you will see references to "Ultra" and "Original," and we are using the "Original" version.




Again, if you don't find what you need in the information provided, reach out to your instructor; if there is a technical issue, your instructor will contact the LMS administrator.

### The Courses Tab

Distance Education@PTC

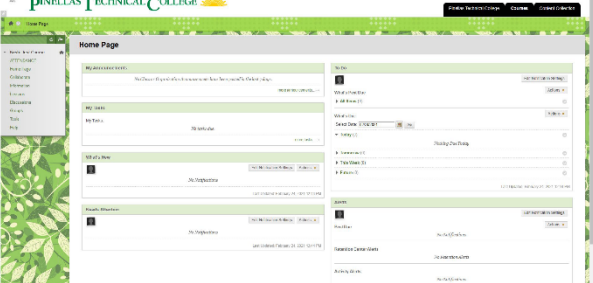
Blackboard



When you click on the Courses tab, there's really not much to see (picture above) – until you click on the course in which you're enrolled (most people have only one, depending upon the program).

Distance Education@PTC

Blackboard

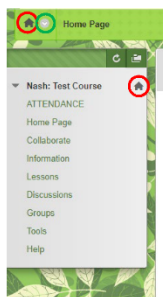


The screen gets a lot more interesting, once you click on the class and go into your actual course. There is a navigation menu on the left side of the screen. In addition, and depending upon how the instructor has chosen to set it up, there are various items on the 'body' of the screen like announcements, a to-do list, tasks ... it will depend upon how your instructor has chosen to structure your course, and each program is set up differently.



### Navigating the menu

The menu that is illustrated in this orientation guide might not look identical to the one that you see in your course. Instructors have the capability to turn menu items on and off, and to rename them as they choose, to better fit the needs of the program curriculum.



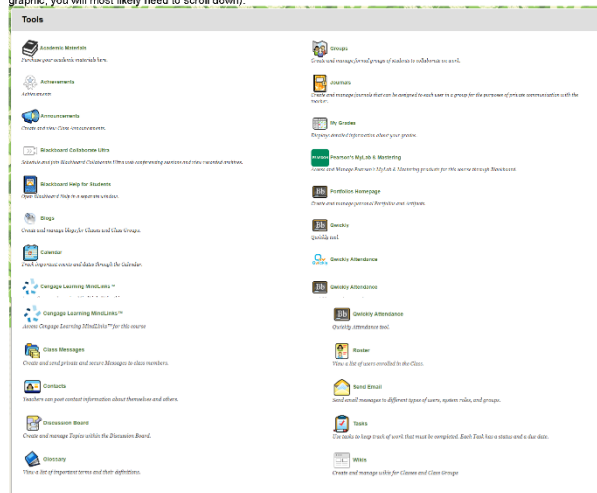
Your instructor may or may not use the attendance "plug-in" that allows you to log in daily and establish your attendance ("ATTENDANCE" at the top of the menu). Menu items may have other names and/or there may be more than you see listed here. If your instructor is using Collaborate, he or she may call it something different. Again, each program may have a different look and feel, and your instructor will guide you through where and how to access the specific content and curriculum for your course, and how to access

### A couple of things to point out

- Clicking the "Help" link at the bottom of the menu takes you DIRECTLY to <https://help.blackboard.com/learn/user> - and you can search for help on any issue that you need.
- No matter WHERE you are in the course, if you click on one of the little "house" icons (circled in red on the graphic above), it will return you to the main page.
- If you are enrolled in more than one class (depending upon your program), you can switch courses easily by using the down-arrow (circled in green on the graphic above).

### Using the Tools

When you click the "Tools" option on the menu, you will get the following choices (to see the choices on the second graphic, you will most likely need to scroll down):



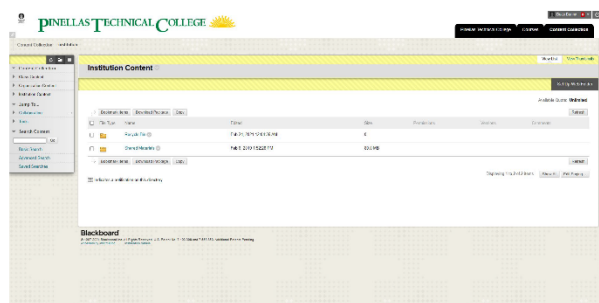
You'll notice that some of these tools are already available to you in other areas of Bb – some of them might already be on your main course screen. Others are available to you elsewhere, OR your instructor might have already created links on the menu for you. There are communication tools in here, which may or may not be used (communication methods depend upon the instructor's preference). You can check grades from here – but there's ALSO a link to your grades, e-mail, tasks, announcements and others from the main PTC tab page.

It's going to depend upon what you need for your program, and your way of work, which tools you use. Again, remember that you have access to your tools from the main page (where you land when you first log in), as well as from 'Tools' on the class navigation menu.

One thing you will find in BbLearn+ ... there are many paths which will get you to the same place.

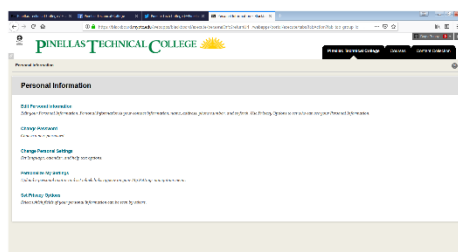
### The Content Collection Tab

There is a little to browse on the **Content Collection** tab, but not really much of use. There are *Shared Materials*, but the orientation videos are out-of-date; unfortunately, they are still linked elsewhere and cannot be deleted as a result.



The upside is that you do have access to 'Tools' from this tab, as well as from anywhere else, and your instructor may set up a library to share files here (although sharing directly within the course makes much more sense).

### A Final Note on Personal Information



This is the personal information screen, which can be accessed from Tools – and a number of other places. You can edit your personal information, contact information, add a photo or avatar, and even change your password (which is not recommended, and if you change it then forget it, it will need to be reset).

Please make sure that any information that you add to your Bb account is accurate, and any photos or avatars that are uploaded are business-appropriate.

Remember that we keep your information private – it is part of our district and organizational policy. You also have an ethical and academic obligation, as a student of Pinellas Technical College, to:

- safeguard your username and password,
- complete and submit your own work,
- perform and take assessments under your own name and only for your own benefit, and
- not to share information or assignments with other students.

You will possibly be asked to sign something stating that you understand this, and failure to uphold any of these expectations could be perceived as academic dishonesty.



#### Expectations of Privacy

The School Board of Pinellas County, Florida and Pinellas Technical College encourage you to remember that, while we have all the necessary safeguards in place to protect your personal information from public eyes, there should be no expectation of privacy regarding content you are storing on our electronic resources. Further, any and all electronic resources supplied by the District and/or PTC, including but not limited to accounts, access to software, and network access or storage, are intended for program-related use.

Your instructor, your guidance counselor, and your program administrator will have access to your Blackboard Learn+™ account, and will be able to view your grades, academic submissions, and program progress.

**Remember:** If you have difficulties of ANY kind, start with your instructor ... they can direct you, or advocate on your behalf.

**Good luck with your program!**

**#CareerInAYear**



# Blackboard Exemplary Course Program Rubric

**Blackboard**  
NOW PART OF ANTHOLOGY



The Exemplary Course Program recognizes instructors and course designers whose courses demonstrate best practices in four major areas: Course Design, Interaction & Collaboration, Assessment, and Learner Support. Submitted courses are evaluated by a peer group of Blackboard clients using the Exemplary Course Program Rubric.

## SCORES AND VALUES IN THE EXEMPLARY COURSE PROGRAM RUBRIC

The Exemplary Course Program Rubric uses numerical point values for each standard. These point values (from 1 to 5) have been assigned to indicate the relative importance of that standard, with values of 5 representing compulsory standards. Compulsory standards must be met in order to receive an Exemplary course award. The 14 compulsory standards are as follows:

### Compulsory Standards:

- › Goals and objectives are clearly written, appropriate for the course level, and aligned to desired outcomes
- › Content is made available or “chunked” in manageable segments (i.e., presented in distinct learning units or modules)
- › It is clear how the instructional strategies will enable learners to reach course goals and objectives (e.g., instructions or overview of course activities is provided and aligned to course objectives)
- › Course design includes guidance for learners to work with content in meaningful ways (e.g., clear instructions, content outline, video, course orientation) and how to proceed
- › The design and delivery of content integrate alternative resources (e.g., transcripts) or enable assistive processes (e.g., voice recognition) for those needing accommodation
- › Course files (e.g., documents, PDFs, presentations) are easily readable by assistive technologies (e.g., screen readers, screen magnification)
- › A rubric or equivalent grading document is included to explain how participation will be evaluated
- › It is clear to students how performance in an assessment(s) will be evaluated (e.g. rubric, equivalent grading document, section in syllabus)
- › Assessment activities occur frequently throughout the duration of the course
- › Multiple types of assessments are used (e.g., research project, objective test, discussions, etc.)
- › Orientation materials explain how to navigate both the LMS and the course
- › Contact information for the instructor is easy to find
- › Course/instructor policies (e.g., decorum, behavior, netiquette) are included and easy to find
- › Learners have the opportunity to give feedback to the instructor regarding course design and course content both during course delivery and after course completion

There are 191 total points available in the Exemplary Course Program Rubric. In order to receive an Exemplary course rating, a score of at least 85% must be earned. Ratings of Compelling and Promising will be awarded with scores of 80% and 70%, respectively.

**Exemplary** 85% (163 points or more)

**Compelling** 80% (153-162 points)

**Promising** 70% (134-152 points)

## COURSE DESIGN

Course Design addresses elements of instructional design. For the purpose of this rubric, course design includes such elements as structure of the course, learning objectives, organization of content, and instructional strategies.

## INTERACTION AND COLLABORATION

Interaction and Collaboration can take many forms. The ECP criteria place emphasis on the type and amount of interaction and collaboration within an online environment.

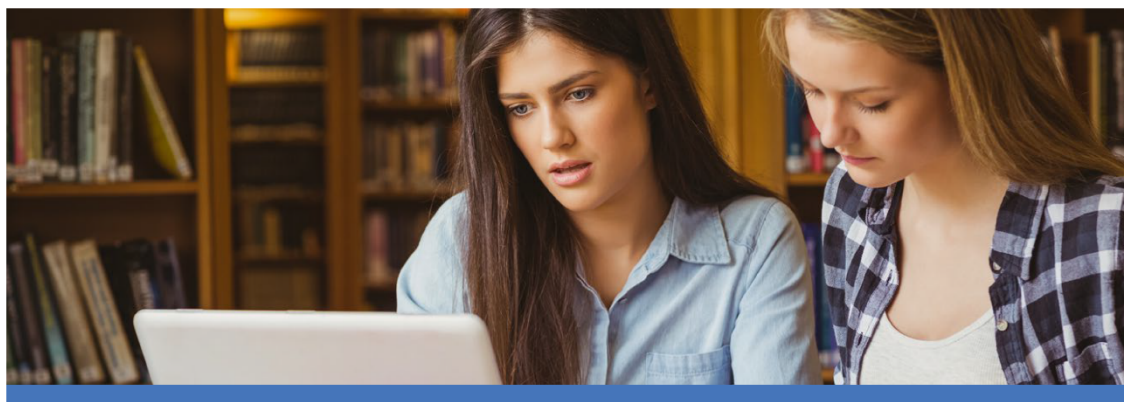
Interaction denotes communication between and among learners and instructors, synchronously or asynchronously. Collaboration is a subset of interaction and refers specifically to those activities in which groups are working interdependently toward a shared result. This differs from group activities that can be completed by students working independently of one another and then combining the results, much as one would when assembling a jigsaw puzzle with parts of the puzzle worked out separately then assembled together. A learning community is defined here as the sense of belonging to a group, rather than each student perceiving himself/herself studying independently.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment focuses on instructional activities designed to measure progress toward learning outcomes, provide feedback to students and instructors, and/or enable grading or evaluation. This section addresses the quality and type of student assessments within the course.

## LEARNER SUPPORT

Learner Support addresses the support resources made available to students taking the course. Such resources may be accessible within or external to the course environment. Learner support resources address a variety of student services.



## Blackboard Exemplary Course Program Rubric

Standard Categories and Subcategories	Exemplary Standard	Points
<b>1.0 Course Design</b>		
Goals and Objectives	1.1 Goals and objectives are clearly written, appropriate for the course level, and aligned to desired outcomes	5
	1.2 Goals and objectives are easily located within the course visible in a variety of areas (e.g., within the syllabus and each individual learning unit)	4
	1.3 Goals and objectives are written in measurable outcomes (e.g., learners know what they are expected to be able to do)	4
Content Composition and Structure	1.4 Content is made available or “chunked” in manageable segments (i.e., presented in distinct learning units or modules)	5
	1.5 Content is enhanced with multimedia (e.g., video, audio, images, interactive learning objects)	4
	1.6 Navigation is intuitive	3
	1.7 Low-cost or no-cost materials are used when available	1
Learner Engagement	1.8 It is clear how the instructional strategies will enable learners to reach course goals and objectives (e.g., instructions or overview of course activities is provided and aligned to course objectives)	5
	1.9 Course design includes guidance for learners to work with content in meaningful ways (e.g., clear instructions, content outline, video, course orientation) and how to proceed	5
Technology Use	1.10 LMS tools are used to reduce the labor intensity of learning (e.g., providing links to needed resources where they will be used in the course, integrating publisher resources that are tailored to the course materials, and providing streamlined access to supplementary materials)	4
	1.11 Technology available in the course is used to facilitate learning by engaging learners with course content	3
	1.12 Technologies are used creatively in ways that transcend traditional, teacher-centered instruction (e.g., peer-led instruction, technology-supported learner choice, flipped classroom)	3

Standard Categories and Subcategories	Exemplary Standard	Points
Accessibility of Course Design	1.13 The design and delivery of content integrate alternative resources (e.g., transcripts) or enable assistive processes (e.g., voice recognition) for those needing accommodation	5
	1.14 Course files (e.g., documents, PDFs, presentations) are easily readable by assistive technologies (e.g., screen readers, screen magnification)	5
	1.15 Course materials support multiple learning preferences (e.g., visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), kinesthetic (moving), and tactile (touching))	3
	1.16 Design factors such as color, text size manipulations, audio and video controls, and alt text reflect universal accessibility considerations	2
<b>2.0 Interaction and Collaboration</b>		
Communication Strategies	2.1 Synchronous communication activities benefit from real-time interactions (e.g., students gain practice discussing course content extemporaneously in office hours, exam review sessions, student-led live meetings, real-time class meetings)	4
	2.2 There are opportunities for synchronous (e.g., live meetings, chat) and/or asynchronous (e.g., discussion board, email) interaction, as appropriate	3
	2.3 Communication strategies promote critical reflection or other higher order thinking aligned with learning objectives	3
Development of Learning Community	2.4 Collaboration activities reinforce course content and learning outcomes, while building workplace-useful skills (e.g., teamwork, cooperation, negotiation, consensus-building)	4
	2.5 Learner-to-learner and learner-to-instructor interactions are required as part of the course	3
	2.6 Activities are designed to help build a sense of community, rather than each learner perceiving himself/herself studying independently	2
Interaction Logistics	2.7 A rubric or equivalent grading document is included to explain how participation will be evaluated	5
	2.8 Examples of quality communications (e.g., what constitutes a “good” response) are provided to the student	4
	2.9 Instructions are written clearly (e.g., quantity of interactions, levels of participation) and presented inline	3

Standard Categories and Subcategories	Exemplary Standard	Points
<b>3.0 Assessment</b>		
Learner Expectations	3.1 It is clear to students how performance in an assessment(s) will be evaluated (e.g. rubric, equivalent grading document, section in syllabus)	5
	3.2 Assessments align to goals, objectives, and content and are visible to the learner	4
	3.3 Instructions are written clearly (e.g., grading, acceptable file formats, due dates, number of attempts, required posts) and presented inline	4
	3.4 Examples of quality work are provided to the student	4
Assessment Design	3.5 Assessment activities occur frequently throughout the duration of the course	5
	3.6 Multiple types of assessments are used (e.g., research project, objective test, discussions)	5
	3.7 Assessments are designed to mimic authentic environments to facilitate knowledge transfer (e.g., role-playing, scenario-based questions, clinical experience, practicum)	4
Learner Self-Assessment	3.8 Opportunities for learner self-assessment are provided (e.g., practice test, journal, self-reflection, quiz)	2
	3.9 Self-assessments provide constructive, meaningful feedback	2
<b>4.0 Learner Support</b>		
Orientation to Course and LMS	4.1 Orientation materials explain how to navigate both the LMS and the course	5
	4.2 Orientation materials are found easily (few clicks) with clear return to other areas of the course	3
	4.3 Information regarding required/optional technology, including how to access/acquire, and any additional costs, is provided	3
Instructor Contact Information & Communication	4.4 Contact information for the instructor is easy to find	5
	4.5 The instructor's methods of collecting and returning work are clearly explained	4
	4.6 Acceptable communication methods for contacting the instructor are identified and included (e.g., email, phone, chat, social media)	4
	4.7 Expected response time for instructor replies is included	3
	4.8 The instructor's role within the course is explained	3

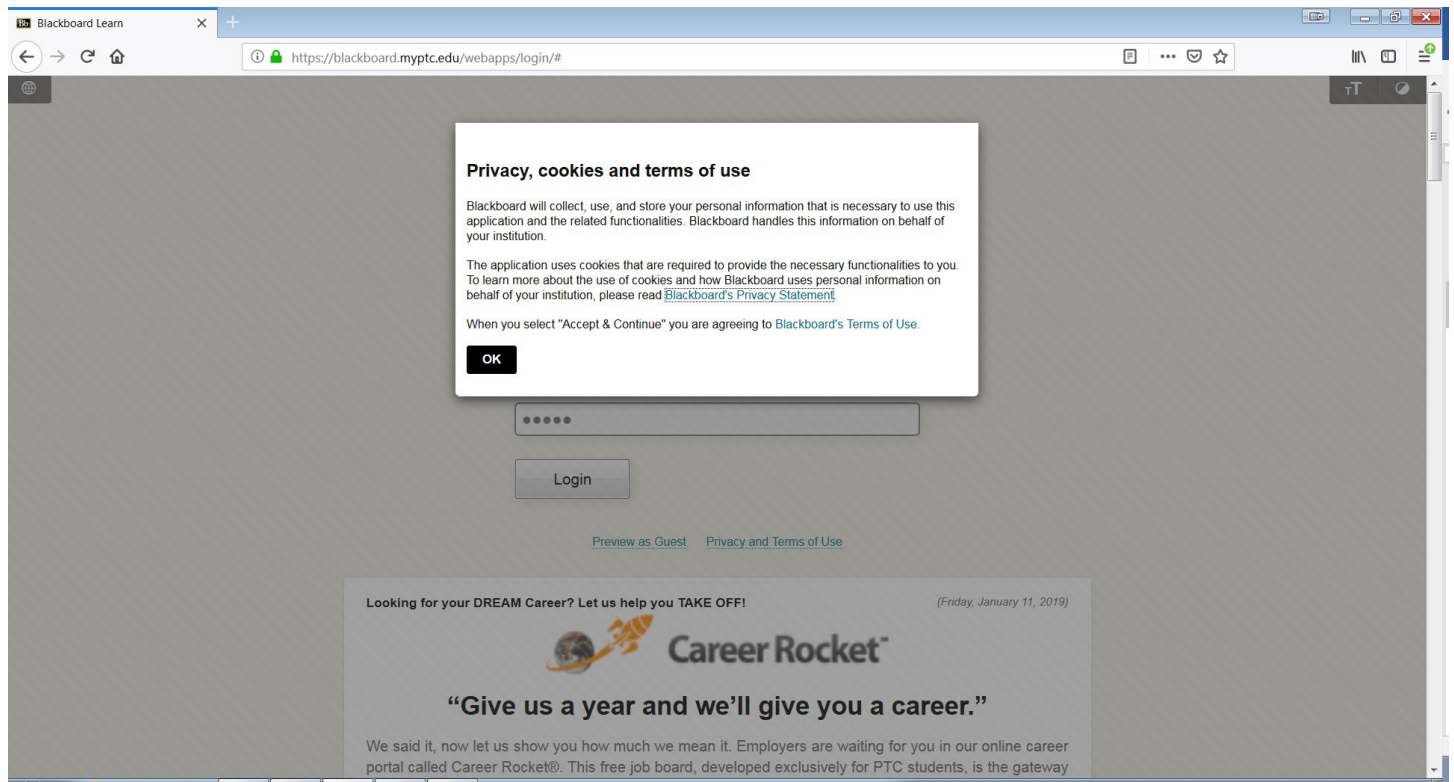
Standard Categories and Subcategories	Exemplary Standard	Points
Course / Institutional Policies & Support	4.9 Course/instructor policies (e.g., decorum, behavior, netiquette) are included and easy to find	5
	4.10 Links to institutional policies (e.g., academic honesty policies), materials, and forms relevant for learner success are included and easy to find	4
	4.11 Links to institutional services (e.g., tech support, help desk, library, writing center) are included and easy to find	4
	4.12 Links to institutional policies, contacts, and procedures for supporting learners with disabilities are included and easy to find	4
Accessibility and Technical Factors for Learner Support	4.13 Alternative file types are provided (e.g., learner needs and/or choice, availability)	3
	4.14 Lengthy/large files are broken into smaller segments for improved content consumption and usability (e.g., six 10-minute audio/video files versus a single 60 minute file, five 10-page documents versus a single 50 page document)	2
	4.15 Multimedia is optimized for web delivery (e.g., videos are streamed whenever possible, graphics are optimized for web delivery)	2
	4.16 Course materials use standard formats to ensure usability	1
	4.17 If technology is required for a specific learning activity, the link to that technology is included with the instructions	1
Feedback	4.18 Learners have the opportunity to give feedback to the instructor regarding course design and course content both during course delivery and after course completion	5
	4.19 Feedback mechanisms allow learners to participate anonymously in course evaluation	3

**Points Total 191**

For more information about the Exemplary Course Program, please visit [community.blackboard.com/ecp](https://community.blackboard.com/ecp) or email us at [ecp@blackboard.com](mailto:ecp@blackboard.com).



## APPENDIX F: Blackboard Privacy, cookies and terms of use displays and links



### **Blackboard's Privacy Statement**

[https://help.blackboard.com/Privacy\\_Statement](https://help.blackboard.com/Privacy_Statement)

### **Blackboard's Terms of Use**

[https://help.blackboard.com/Terms\\_of\\_Use](https://help.blackboard.com/Terms_of_Use)



