



VCU

Blackboard System Usage Policy

Policy Type: Administrative

Responsible Office: Department of Learning Systems

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Policy Statement and Purpose

To ensure that only authorized users have access to the Blackboard System, and that all user information in Blackboard System is secure and accurate. To ensure that accounts with elevated privileges are reviewed and that privileges are granted properly, without compromising the integrity of VCU's Blackboard System.

It is the policy of the Department of Learning Systems in Application Services located within VCU Office of Technology Services that the procedures described herein shall be followed for the creation of Blackboard user accounts for VCU faculty, staff, students and other users of the VCU Blackboard System.

Access will be based on need and will be granted the minimum level of privileges required to meet those needs. This document is used and modified by the Department of Learning Systems Staff to accommodate specific requests for Blackboard System access, accounts, roles, courses, organizations and maintenance of these items.

Noncompliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. VCU supports an environment free from retaliation. Retaliation against any employee who brings forth a good faith concern, asks a clarifying question, or participates in an investigation is prohibited.

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Who Should Know This Policy

All users of the VCU Blackboard System University wide.

Definitions

- **Agreement:** The document stating guidelines, standards and expectations for a specific task, role, or process.
- **Banner:** The Student Information System (SIS) currently used at VCU.
- **Blackboard (Bb) System:** The online course management system currently used at VCU.
- **Blackboard System Administrators:** The current staff in the Department of Learning Systems located within Technology Services at VCU, whose job responsibility includes day-to-day Blackboard System administration, maintenance and security.
- **CIO:** Chief Information Officer (Office of Technology Services)
- **Elevated privileges:** Within the context of this document, elevated privileges are privileges granted to allow specific administrative access and tasks to be performed in Blackboard.
- **Instructor:** Person(s) designated by VCU to teach particular course(s). In Blackboard this role is assigned to the person developing, teaching, or facilitating classes.
- **ISO:** Information Security Officer (Office of Technology Services)
- **IT:** Information Technology
- **Blackboard User:** Within the context of this document, all users of VCU Blackboard System, including faculty, staff, students, contractors, business partners, and affiliates, non-VCU participants in certificate or continuing education related programs.
- **User Accounts:** Within the context of this document, accounts that allow login to the Blackboard System.
- **VCU:** Virginia Commonwealth University
- **VCU eID-Tools:** The current tool used by authorized VCU employees to check the status of any current or former user at VCU.
- **VCU eID:** The standard electronic credentials used by VCU employees, students, and affiliates to access various VCU systems including but not limited to email, Blackboard System, and portal.
- **VCU Wiki System:** The standard web-based Wiki system used by the University to store documentation.

Contacts

Department of Learning Systems and the Director of Learning Systems

Procedures

Procedures are mandatory actions to establish required actions and processes to comply with a policy, support compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and mitigate risk. The following procedure outline is provided for reference, but may be changed as appropriate to best communicate the required steps.

1. Procedures for Creation and Maintenance of User Accounts in Blackboard

Important Note: Sharing of accounts is not allowed in Blackboard under any circumstances. Only one person per account shall be permitted. Accounts and passwords should never be shared with anyone other than the person for whom they were created. If it is determined that an account is being shared, reasonable corrective actions will be taken. The Bb System Administrators will report the violation to the account owner, their manager and if appropriate, to the ISO.

o Student Accounts

- o To maintain synchronization of student data in Blackboard and the Banner System, Blackboard accounts for VCU students should not be created manually; they should only be generated by the Banner system.
- o All VCU student accounts are based on the student's VCU eID.
- o Unless otherwise specified, VCU students are given the default Bb system role of "student".
- o All VCU student course enrollments will be automatically generated by the Banner system.
- o Blackboard instructors should not manually enroll students in courses that they are not officially registered for and enrolled in via the VCU Banner system.
- o The Bb System Administrator will disable and/or remove the student account from the Blackboard system when:
 - official notification of a change in status is received from the Registrar
 - the account has not been accessed in 2 consecutive years AND has no course or organization enrollments
 - the account does not have an active status at VCU (in eID-Tools) and has never been used
 - official notification is received from the Technology Services CIO or ISO that there has been security breach, misuse of the account, or other critical situation
- o The Bb System Administrators will maintain sole responsibility for changing any student roles in the Blackboard system (institution or system-level roles).
- o The Bb System Administrators will maintain sole responsibility for changing the availability of any student in the Blackboard system--at the system level.

o Faculty and Staff Accounts

- o All new VCU faculty and staff accounts are based on VCU eID
- o Unless otherwise specified, VCU faculty and staff are given the default Bb system role of "faculty" or "staff", respectively.
- o The Bb System Administrator will disable and/or remove the faculty or staff account from the Blackboard system when:
 - official notification of a change in status is received from the Office of Human Resources and approved by the Technology Services CIO
 - the account has not been accessed in 2 consecutive years AND has no course or organization enrollments
 - the individual does not have an active status at VCU and has never used the Blackboard account

- the account has never been used, and official notification is received from the Technology Services CIO or ISO that there has been security breach, misuse of the account, or other critical situation
 - The Bb System Administrators will maintain sole responsibility for changing any faculty or staff roles in the Blackboard system (institution or system-level roles).
 - The Bb System Administrators will maintain sole responsibility for changing the availability of any faculty or staff in the Blackboard system--at the system level.
 - **Non-VCU Accounts**
 - Requests for non-VCU students, faculty, or staff accounts should be submitted by via a Technology Services help request ticket.
 - All such requests will be forwarded to Learning Systems and will be evaluated by the Blackboard System Administrators and the Director of Learning Systems. A decision will be made, and if approved, a standard guideline will be decided, documented, and used to create the accounts, and future accounts for the same purpose, program or department.
 - These accounts should always have an identifiable prefix, so as not to interfere with valid Banner-generated VCU eIDs.
 - Unless otherwise specified, non-VCU student accounts are given the default Bb system role of "student".
 - Unless otherwise specified, non-VCU faculty and staff accounts are given the default Bb system role of "faculty" or "staff", respectively.
 - The Bb System Administrator will remove the account from the Blackboard system when:
 - their business with the university is completed and the Blackboard administrators are notified by the individual, the department administrator or designee of the individual's home department
 - official notification of a change in status is received from the School, Department, or Program
 - the account has not been accessed in 2 consecutive years AND has no course or organization enrollments
 - If an official notification is received from the Technology Services CIO or ISO that there has been security breach, misuse of the account, or other critical situation.
 - The Bb System Administrators will maintain sole responsibility for changing any non-VCU account roles in the Blackboard system (institution or system-level roles).
 - The Bb System Administrators will maintain sole responsibility for changing the availability of any non-VCU accounts in the Blackboard system--at the system level.
- **Procedures for Creation and Maintenance of Courses in Blackboard**

Purpose: To ensure the integrity of the Blackboard System by having only authorized persons creating courses in Blackboard and those Blackboard users granted roles with elevated privileges understand and adhere to procedures provided.

- **Course Creation and Merges**

- Standard, credit courses in the Bb System will be created by each instructor, using the tools provided to faculty in Blackboard.
- Non-credit courses will be created by the instructor.
- Non-credit courses to be used for testing or training purposes will be created by the faculty, using the tools provided to faculty in Blackboard.
- If users do not have access rights to these faculty tools, they must submit a Technology Services help request ticket, which will be forwarded to the Learning Systems group. The Learning Systems group maintains sole responsibility for making these tools available to the appropriate Blackboard users.
- Requests for courses merges in Blackboard must be submitted by the instructor, via a Technology Services help request ticket. All such requests will be forwarded to the Learning Systems group. The Learning Systems group maintains sole responsibility for setting up merged courses in Blackboard.

- **Standard Course Enrollments and Maintenance**
 - Course enrollments are automatically processed from Banner to Blackboard, using the VCU eID.
 - The instructor is responsible for enrolling additional instructors in their course as well as Teaching Assistants, Observers, and Guests.
 - Should an instructor choose to manually enroll an existing student in a Blackboard course that the student is not officially registered for and enrolled in via the VCU Banner system, said student may not receive credit for the course. It will at the discretion of the instructor and appropriate departments at the university to determine if the student will receive credit.

- **Course Enrollments and Maintenance for Unique Circumstances**
Enrollments for Non-credit Courses or Programs
 - Manual enrollments for courses that require access by users who DO have a VCU eID will be the responsibility of the instructor.
 - For users already in the Bb System, instructors should manually enroll them in these courses.
 - For VCU users that are not in the Bb System, instructors must submit a Technology Services help request ticket. All such requests will be forwarded to the Learning Systems group. The instructor must provide the user's first and last name, and their VCU eID.

- **Procedures for Creation and Maintenance of Organizations in Blackboard**
Purpose: To ensure the integrity of the Blackboard system by having only authorized persons creating organizations in Blackboard, enrolling users in the organizations, and that users granted roles with elevated privileges understand and adhere to procedures provided.

- The Bb System Administrators will maintain sole responsibility for creating new organizations in the Blackboard System.
- New organization requests MUST have one designated “primary” leader, who will be the main contact person and the one responsible for the organization. This user must submit a Technology Services help request ticket, which will be forwarded to the Learning Systems group. The request must include:
 - the name of the organization
 - an abbreviated ID for the organization (to be used to determine the organization ID)
 - eID for the designated “primary” leader and contact for the organization
- Learning Systems Staff will create the organization following the documented standards for naming standards and will enroll the designated person as a leader in the organization.
 - Organization Name: Requester can provide this (no specific syntax required)
 - Organization ID: Requester can suggest this, but should at least begin with an abbreviation that is unique to that organization; optional: additional abbreviations and/or semester/year.

- **Managing Requests for Elevated Privileges in Blackboard**

- **Required Information for Elevated Privilege Requests**

Once a request is received, the Department of Learning Systems will contact the person requesting the elevated privileges and send them information and questions regarding the scope of their needs. The requester must respond and provide this required information in order for LS to evaluate and determine if the privileges will be granted, and what those privileges will include. These questions and information are documented in the Learning Systems space within the VCU Wiki System.

To be granted elevated privileges in Blackboard, valid training and/or instructions must be provided by VCU Blackboard System Administrators in the Learning Systems department of Technology Services; and must also have occurred within the past year. Due to the increasing complexity of the Blackboard system after upgrades, and enhanced security requirements, the following are NOT considered valid training or expertise for receiving elevated privileges to the VCU Blackboard System:

- Any training and/or instructions provided by other persons or departments, and occurring more than 1 year ago
- Any former job responsibilities related to Blackboard at VCU or elsewhere (although this experience may be taken into consideration)

- **User Agreements for elevated privileges**

After the evaluation and decision has been made to grant the privileges, the

Department of Learning Systems will send the appropriate procedures and information to the person requesting the elevated privileges. The agreement may be modified by LS or a new role created with different privileges if necessary. If this is necessary, LS will update the agreement with the new information. These User Agreements are documented in the Learning Systems space within the VCU Wiki System. Prior to receiving the account and privileges, the requester must return the agreement to LS, stating that they agree to adhere to the procedures and responsibilities as documented. This acknowledgement of the agreement will also be stored in the Learning Systems space within the VCU Wiki System.

- **Denied Requests for Elevated Privileges**

After the evaluation and decision has been made to deny a request, the Department of Learning Systems will follow-up with the requester and provide the reason(s) the privileges will not be granted.

Forms

There are no forms associated with this policy and procedures.

Related Documents

Appendix A - VCU Information Security Standards Policy

<http://www.ts.vcu.edu/2459.html>

Adding an Instructor to Another Instructor's Bb Course

<http://www.ts.vcu.edu/askit/knowledge-base/blackboard-91/policies/adding%20an%20instructor%20to%20another%20instructors%20bb/>

Revision History

None – New Policy

FAQs

There are no FAQs associated with this policy and procedures.