



## Using Permissions

### Introduction

Once content is added to the *Blackboard Content System*, permissions must be granted to make the content accessible to users and groups of users. Managing permissions on files and folders may be complicated since permissions behave both alone on single items and in combination with other permissions on folders. Users and user lists may be given different types of permissions to individual files and folders, ranging from read only access, to modifying, managing and removing content.

### Prerequisites

This document is intended for users who are using the *Blackboard Content System* to manage content. Before referencing this document, users should be familiar with Content System interface and they should be able to complete basic tasks. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- adding, moving, and removing items in the Content System
- searching for items in the Content System

### Contents

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### Permissions Overview

Permissions enable users to read and perform actions on items and folders added to the *Blackboard Content System*. Users must be granted permissions in order to access content directly from the *Blackboard Content System* and also through links in courses and Portfolios. The following permissions are available within the *Blackboard Content System*:

**Read:** Users have the ability to view items or folders.

**Write:** Users have the ability to make changes to items and folders.

**Remove:** Users have the ability to remove items from the folder or the folder itself.

**Manage:** Users have ability to control the properties and settings of items and folders.

#### **Who grants permissions?**

Any user with Read and Manage permission on an item or folder may grant permissions to other users and user lists. If permissions are changed on a folder, the user must have Read and Manage permissions on the folder, but only Manage permission on items within the folder is necessary.

#### **Who receives permissions?**

Users and groups of users, such as Course User Lists, may be granted one or more permissions. For example, Read permission for an item may be granted to an entire course list. The owner may grant additional permissions to single users within the course list, for instance, one user may be granted

Write permission. Privileges may be modified for subfolders and items within a folder. Thus, Instructors and Students can work with items in the same folder and the Instructor can prevent certain items from being modified by a student.

### Smart permissions

Tools in the *Blackboard Content System* are 'smart'. When a user searches for files or folders, or attempts to manipulate files or folders (for example, using copy, move or remove), he or she will only be able to view and alter content based on the existing permissions. For example, if a user searches for an item to which he or she does not have Read permission, the item will not appear in the Search Results.

### Folders with Default permissions

Some users have default permissions to specific folders. In this case, various permissions are automatically granted to specific folders.

- **User folders** – These folders appear under My Content in the Content System menu. A user has Read, Write, Manage, and Remove permissions to his or her user folder. The Administrator determines the availability of these folders on a system-wide basis. If the *Blackboard Portal System* is installed, the Administrator may make folders available to users with specific institution roles.
- **Course folders** – These folders appear under the Courses area on the Content System menu and are used to store content for specific courses. Instructors, Teaching Assistants and Course Builders have Read, Write, Manage, and Remove permissions to the folders for their courses. The course folder is automatically created on the system the first time one of these users accesses the *Blackboard Content System*. Other course users (such as Students) who are enrolled in a course do not see this folder because it is intended to be a workspace for course developers. Students must be given Read permissions to a course folder for it to be accessible to them. Organization folders function in the same way as course folders.

**Note:** Administrators may change these default permissions. For example, the Administrator might restrict course folder access to Instructors only.

- **Institution and Library Content folders** - All users with system accounts have Read permission to these folders.
- **Course folders within eReserves** – All users enrolled in a course (All Course Users) have Read permissions to the specific course folder in eReserves.

### Adding permissions to an item or folder

Permissions are added and removed on the Modify Permissions page for an item or folder. Follow the steps below to add permissions to an item for user:

- Step 1** Open the Content System folder where the item is located (for example, /users).
- Step 2** Select **Modify** next to the item. The Modify page will appear.
- Step 3** Select **Permissions**. The Modify Permissions page will appear.
- Step 4** Select **Add Users**. The Add User page will appear.
- Step 5** Complete the Add User page with the following information:

Field	Description
<b>Usernames</b>	
Enter the usernames for one or more users or select <b>Browse</b> to locate users in the system.	
<b>Set Permissions</b>	
<b>Permissions</b>	Check each box for the permissions that will be applied to the user or users.

Permissions may also be added for user lists, such as All System Accounts or a Course List. Follow the steps below:

- Step 1** Open the Content System folder where the item is located (for example, /users).
- Step 2** Select **Modify** next to the item. The Modify page will appear.
- Step 3** Select **Permissions**. The Modify Permissions page will appear.
- Step 4** Select a user list in the drop-down list on the Action Bar. The Add User List page will appear.
- Step 5** Complete and submit the Add User List page

### Granting permissions to folders v. items

Permissions granted to a folder may or may not affect items and subfolders within the folder. An additional option, **Overwrite**, appears on the Permission pages for folders, allowing the user to choose how the contents of a folder are affected when Permissions are modified.

If the **Overwrite** option is selected, the current permissions for all items and subfolders in the folder are removed. The permissions selected in the **Permissions** field are granted to these items and subfolders. After modifying permissions on a folder, the user may change the permissions on an item within the folder. These permissions will be overwritten if **Overwrite** is selected for the parent folder again.

If this option is not selected, the permissions selected in the Permissions field are granted to all items and sub folders, but existing permissions are not removed. For example, if an item already has Read permission, and only Write permission is selected on the Add Users page, the item will be granted Read and Write permission.

### Common areas of confusion

There are some common scenarios where users may be confused about permissions.

#### Viewing files and folders

Usually when an item or folder is not displayed to a user it is because the user does not have Read permission. However, there are a few common instances where a user cannot see a file or folder because of other system rules:

##### *Situation #1*

A user is enrolled in a class, but the course folder does not appear under Courses or e-Reserves.

**Reason:** Course folders are not created in the *Blackboard Content System* until the Instructor, Teacher's Assistant, or Course Builder has accessed the *Blackboard Content System*. Once this happens, the course folder will appear to enrolled users under e-Reserves. Additionally, Read permission must be granted to the user before the course folder appears under Courses.

##### *Situation #2*

A user is enrolled in an organization, but the organization folder does not appear under e-Reserves.

**Reason:** Organizations do not have folders under e-Reserves; only course folders appear under e-Reserves.

##### *Situation #3*

A user can view all of the content of his or her Portfolio; but a user with whom this Portfolio is shared cannot view all of the files linked to in the Portfolio.

**Reason:** The Portfolio User List no longer has Read permission to all items linked to in the Portfolio. When the Portfolio was originally created and shared, the users with whom it was shared were added to the Portfolio User List and granted Read access to all items linked to in the Portfolio. Since then, Read access has been removed from one or more of these items; when the user accesses the items through the Portfolio he or she is unable to view them. A user with Read and Manage permission to the file must add Read permission for the Portfolio User List to each item where this permission has been removed.

**Situation #4**

A user can view a folder, but not all of its contents

**Reason:** The user has Read access to the folder, but not to its contents.

**Performing actions on files or folders**

Usually when a user cannot perform an action on a file or folder it is because he or she does not have the correct permissions. However, there are a few common instances where this may be confusing:

**Situation #1**

A user has Manage permission on an item, but is unable to copy it to a different folder.

**Reason:** The user does not have Write permission on the destination folder.

**Situation #2**

A user may view a file or folder but is unable to link to it from a Portfolio.

**Reason:** The user only has Read access to the file or folder; Manage access is required to link the file or folder to a Portfolio.

**Note:** The user does not need Manage permissions to items added from the /institution folder because All System Accounts have Read permissions to /institution. The system assumes that if All System Accounts have Read access, anyone may link to it.

### **Table of permissions required for specific actions**

The following table explains which permissions are required for specific actions. In the case of folders, the user generally needs the permission on the folder and all its contents, subfolders and their contents.

**Note:** Read permission on subfolders is not always necessary, as long as the user has Read permission on the folder he or she is working with, and has other necessary permissions to the folder and its content. For example, if a user has Read and Remove permission on a parent folder and only Remove permission on the subfolder, the parent folder (including the subfolder) may be removed. In this case, the user may not remove only the subfolder because the user cannot Read it.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Permissions required</b>
Add a file or folder	Read and Write permission on the current folder
Add, Modify or Remove permissions	Read and Manage permissions on an item
View permissions	Read and Manage permissions on an item
Download a file or folder	Read permission on file or folder and all items and folders within the folder to be downloaded.
Email a file or folder	Read permission on the item or folder
View properties for a file or folder	Read permission on the item
Copy a file or folder	Read permission on the item (and all its subfolders and files in the case of folders) and Write permission on the destination folder
Modify properties for a file or folder	Read and Write permissions on the item
Move a file or folder	Read and Remove permissions on the item to be moved, Write on the destination folder
Remove a file or folder	Read and Remove permissions on the item
Lock and unlock a file or folder	User must have Read and Write on permissions the item. Only the lock owner (the user who set the lock) may unlock an item.
Add a comment to or view a comment on a file or folder	Read permission on the item or folder if Comments are shared. Read and Manage permissions on the item or folder if Comments are private
Bookmark a file or folder	Read permission on the item
Tracking – enable/disable	Read and Manage permissions on the item
Versions- checkout a file	Read and Write permissions on the item
Versions- check in a file	A version is locked when the file is checked out; only the lock owner (person who checked out the file) may check it in. User must have Read and Write permissions on the item.
Version – remove a file	Read, Write, and Remove permissions on item
Version – rollback a file	Only the lock owner (person who checked out the file) may rollback a version. User must have Read and Write permissions on the item.
Workflow – add a file	Read and Manage permissions on the item
Workflow – add a comment	User must be the Workflow Activity owner or recipient
Workflow – modify a file	User must be the Workflow Activity owner
Workflow – remove a comment from a sent or received Workflow Activity	User must be the Workflow Activity owner or the user who submitted the comment

## **Additional Documentation**

Additional Blackboard documents can be found on the Behind the Blackboard extranet. Use the following URL to access Behind the Blackboard:

<http://www.blackboard.com/products/services/support.htm>

A login is required to access Behind the Blackboard. Users may create their own login for roles other than Administrator. Administrators must receive their Behind the Blackboard login from their Blackboard Account Manager.

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