

Blackboard CourseInfo

Quick Facts

1. Class sites for Blackboard CourseInfo have to be requested via our [online request form](http://www.uic.edu/depts/accc/itl/courseinfo/) at <http://www.uic.edu/depts/accc/itl/courseinfo/>. They are set up on a semester basis, and all user data is erased two weeks after classes end. However, all other site content is [archived](#) and can be re-used in future semesters. When requesting a site for another term, simply specify which previous site you wish to re-use for it.

2. We create all student **user accounts** for your class site by the first day of classes, according to the call number you provide to us when requesting the site. Instructors and their staff can add additional users from the Control Panel, and change their password when students are unable to get in. Login names are to be valid UIC NetIDs (**lower case**). The Blackboard CourseInfo password is unrelated to the *icarus/tigger* password. For all new accounts, the initial password are the last 8 digits of the SSN. For more detail, see our local [policies and procedures](#) page.

3. Support for instructors and their staff is available via email to courseinfo@uic.edu and training sessions can be arranged in the [ITL](#). See also our faculty [FAQ](#).

Support for students is given by the instructor (for site-access issues) and the [Client-Services Office](#) (for general problems with Internet access, web browsers, and other applications). When instructors cannot answer student questions, **they** should email courseinfo@uic.edu, **not** the student! Our student [FAQ](#) should be your first reference — **please** point the students to it.

4. Guest Access to all Blackboard CourseInfo sites is possible via the *Preview* button on the login page or in the course catalogue, but only if you as instructor choose to allow this. This means that the users can see the *Announcements* section, and view other areas that you have not explicitly secured (this is intended to allow prospective students to explore your site, and to allow evaluators and colleagues easy access). However, a guest user cannot participate in a class, so he has no

access to the *Student Tools* and *Communication* sections, nor can he take a quiz or survey. See our local [policies and procedures](#) page if you need to grant full access to an outside user. To block guests from viewing, say, your *Course Documents* section, set it to **S** (for secure) in *Course Settings > Area Availability* (Control Panel).

5. Communications options in CourseInfo:

- discussion board (public & group-based -- good for main class discussions and project work)
- real-time chat (e.g. for virtual office hours -- Java)
- mass email to private mail accounts (good for initial announcements about site)
- class dropbox & group dropbox (for homework submission and - return; group collaboration)
- student mini home-pages (community building)

6. Documents can be uploaded by the instructor as course materials, or by students as homework. As not everybody has the same applications (and because of the *danger of virus-infections* from Word/Excel files), you should standardize on the following formats:

- HTML (**.htm,.html**) (everyone can view this; all wordprocessors can make it; good layout control; fully editable)
- PDF (**.pdf**) (everyone can view this with free Acrobat Reader in NSKit; need full Acrobat suite to create -- in labs and on Server Services; full layout control; can be annotated, but not fully edited; great for reviewing, commenting and grading submitted papers)
- Plain text (**.txt**) (gold standard for compatibility; hardly any layout control) -- this includes delimited text files for data-sharing instead of spreadsheet files or SPSS data
- Rich-text (**.rtf**) (can be edited and viewed by all wordprocessors and most editors, e.g. WordPad, BBedit; decent layout control; safe if not opened in *MS Word*)

Documents need to use short filenames (<20 characters) without spaces or other special characters for successful uploading to online course management systems.

7. Assessments in Blackboard CourseInfo can be anonymous surveys or graded quizzes. After making a quiz available, it cannot be edited without losing all existing grades! Available question types: true/false; multiple choice; multiple answers; blank (exact match; multiple

correct answers possible); matching; ordering; and essay/short answer (graded manually).

By first creating **question pools**, you can have quizzes with random selection from pools to circumvent cheating. Pools also allow porting a quiz/survey between class sites.

Until all essay questions are graded, no grade is assigned to the quiz. The gradebook displays an exclamation mark (!) -- click on it to view the student's quiz and grade the essay questions. Then the grade will also be visible to the student. The exclamation mark can also indicate a problem with the quiz submission.

8. The online **Gradebook** can be exported from Blackboard CourseInfo to delimited-text format, but grades cannot be imported back into Blackboard CourseInfo. The gradebook can hold columns for online interactive quizzes (created automatically when you make the quiz available) and for tests and assignments, where you have to enter grades manually (make these columns in *spreadsheet view*).

9. To see results for anonymous **Surveys**, choose *Item View*, select the survey, and then *View Item Analysis* and *View Individual Responses*.

UIC Blackboard CourseInfo support pages:

<http://www.accc.uic.edu/itl/courseinfo/>

Server address:

<http://courseinfo.uic.edu/>