Students often have a number of questions that they need answered when using Blackboard. This is particularly important for students who are new to this campus and are completely unfamiliar with Blackboard as a learning management system. Hopefully, the questions and answers below will shed some light on how Missouri S&T uses Blackboard for classes.

**STUDENT QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**Q: When I login to Blackboard it is slow and takes a long time to load. Is there any way to make Blackboard load faster?**

**A:** Yes. Turn off the “What’s New” module, located under the Course Catalog module. Simply click the “X” in the upper right corner of the module to turn it off.

More information about customizing the Blackboard Home tab can be found at: [http://edtech.mst.edu/support/blackboard9-1/customhometab/](http://edtech.mst.edu/support/blackboard9-1/customhometab/)
**Q:** How do I access my courses?

**A:** Courses are accessed through the My Courses module on the Blackboard Home tab. **IMPORTANT:** Do NOT try to access courses through the My Announcements, My Tasks, or other modules that indicate something new in a course—you will ONLY be able to see the new object and will not be able to interact with the rest of the course!

![Blackboard Home and My Courses](image)

**Q:** What if I can't see my course?

**A:** There may be a couple of reasons why a course is not showing up for you in the My Courses tab.

1. The instructor has not yet made the course available. If you know you should be enrolled in the course and it is not showing up, ask the instructor if the course has been made available.

2. Through some unfortunate mix-up, you are not properly enrolled in the course. Check with the Registrar to make sure that you are duly enrolled in the course. If the Registrar needs to make a change, that change will show up in Blackboard within 24-48 hours.

3. You accidentally used the little gear icon in the My Course tab to “turn off” the course. The little gear icon allows you to decide what courses are visible or not—they are still available to you, but will not show up in the My Courses module. This makes it easy for you to “turn off” old courses that are no longer relevant to you. Old courses will be removed entirely after 2 years and will no longer be accessible to you at all.

**IMPORTANT:** Courses are made “unavailable” automatically a few weeks after the end of the semester. At that point, students will no longer be able to see their courses unless the instructor decides to make the course available again.
Q: The “back” button in my browser doesn’t want to work with Blackboard. What’s going on?

A: **IMPORTANT:** Do NOT use the “back” button to navigate within Blackboard! Blackboard is a web-based application (Facebook is another). Many times when you are working in Blackboard, you are submitting data to the server. Using the “back” button in Blackboard doesn’t work, especially after submitting an Assignment or posting to the Discussion Board as Blackboard wants to go back to the page and can’t—it doesn’t have all the information it needs to show the page again.

The best way to navigate in Blackboard is to use the Course Menu, which is usually available on the left hand side of the screen. Or you can use the “bread crumb” trail that appears at the top of the Blackboard page, as shown below. You can click on any point within the trail to go to that point in Blackboard. For example, clicking “Assignments” in the trail below will take you to the Assignments content area in the course:

Another option for navigating content in Blackboard is to right-click on a content item and then select **Open in Link in New Tab** or **Open Link in New Browser** (see below). Most internet browsers today, especially the most popular ones such as Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Safari, and Google Chrome support the use of tabbed browsing (though Chrome is not fully supported by Blackboard yet).

When you close the tab, you will be right back where you want to be in Blackboard instead of having to navigate to that content area again. It may take a little practice to get used to tabbed browsing, but it is very efficient for navigating Blackboard content (and is very useful on any number of other web sites).
Q: The Course Menu disappeared! I can’t see any of the buttons I should see in my course! What happened?

A: There are three possibilities:

- You have accidentally clicked on the “Hide Course Menu” button, which appears as a left-pointing angled bracket “<” along the right hand side of the Course Menu. To make the menu appear again, look for a right-pointing angled bracket along the left hand side of the browser window where the Course Menu should be. The images below show a Course Menu and also when the Course Menu is hidden:
Another way to make the Course Menu disappear/reappear (called “collapse” and “expand” in Blackboard terms) is to click on the double-up/double-down arrow next to the course menu in the gray box just above the Course Menu. Again, the images below illustrate an expanded/collapsed Course Menu:

Other options may be beyond your control. It is possible that your instructor has not made those buttons available to you, though if other students in the class can see them, then there may be a problem with the course itself. Contact the Help Desk for assistance in those cases.

Q: **How do I submit Assignments?**

A: The digital dropbox is no longer available in Blackboard, so instructors now create Assignments for students to submit work. Once an assignment has been submitted, the Grade Center will allow the instructor to download the submission for grading. Some assignments, such as tests and quizzes, can be graded automatically by Blackboard. Others, such as term papers, require the instructor to manually grade the assignment and provide feedback.

To submit an assignment:

1. Navigate to the Assignment content area in Blackboard. This may be called something else in your specific course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure where to find this area in your course.
2. Click on the link for the assignment.
3. In the Assignment Materials section, type in any text to accompany your submission. For some assignments, this may be all you need to fill out. For most assignments, you will most likely need to also attach a file.
4. Click **Browse for Local File** to search your local machine (C: \ drive) or your network file storage (S: \ drive) for the needed file. You can attach multiple files.

**IMPORTANT:** File names should ONLY use letters, numbers, underscores “_”, or hyphens “-”. The pound sign “#” often causes major issues when submitting assignment files. For example, "Assignment #1.doc" will almost always cause an error when submitting the file or when the instructor tries to download the file. Other symbols can also cause problems.

5. Click **Submit** when finished. **NOTE:** You can also click **Save as Draft** if you want to store some files in your assignment for later. **IMPORTANT:** You MUST click **Submit** in order for your assignment to show up in the Grade Center for grading.

More specific instructions about submitting an assignment can be found at:

http://edtech.mst.edu/support/blackboard9-1/students/submitassignment/

**Q:** Where do I find My Grades and how do I interpret them?

**A:** Students access their grades through the My Grades function in Blackboard. This can be accessed in a couple of different ways, depending on how the instructor sets up the course.

- Most instructors allow students to click on Tools in the Course Menu and then click on My Grades.
- Some instructors will create a My Grades button in the Course Menu (or something similar) that directly links to the My Grades tool.
- If neither one of these options is available, contact the instructor about how to view your grades in Blackboard.

When you are in the My Grades area of Blackboard, you can interpret your grades as follows:

- Submitted assignments that have NOT been graded are marked with a green exclamation point icon: 🔄

  **IMPORTANT:** If you know you submitted an assignment and the instructor has not graded it for a long period (a week or more), the contact the instructor. It is possible that there was a problem when you submitted the file and the instructor never received it.

- Assignments that have been graded will have a point value (or a percentage) and a link in the Grade column. Click the link to access the details about your submission and to access any feedback or files that the instructor has returned to you.

- Click the Icon Legend button at the bottom of the My Grades page for more details about what the different icons mean.
Contact your instructor if you have any questions or concerns about your grades in Blackboard. EdTech is NOT responsible for the accuracy of any grades in Blackboard.

**IMPORTANT:** Grades in Blackboard are NOT your official grade for the course. Official grades are ONLY in JoeSS, which is managed by the Registrar’s Office.

More information about viewing grades from a student perspective can be found at: http://edtech.mst.edu/support/blackboard9-1/students/viewgradecenterstudents/

**Q:** Why do I need to register my clicker in Blackboard? How do I register my clicker?

**A:** If you are enrolled in a “clicker” course, e.g. Chemistry, then you know that the instructor requires you to purchase a clicker. The TurningPoint software used to run a clicker-enabled presentation is tied into Blackboard. Thus, registering your clicker in Blackboard will allow the instructor to easily manage your clicker points in the Grade Center.

To register your clicker, follow the steps in the link below:

http://edtech.mst.edu/support/blackboard9-1/registerclicker/

**Q:** What’s the best way to get help on Blackboard if I run into a problem?

**A:** There are several different things you can try when you run into a problem in Blackboard.

1. Try closing and opening the browser. Sometimes this can resolve issues. It certainly won’t hurt.

2. Try clearing the browser’s cache of information. The browser cache contains a history of everything you do with the browser and every page you’ve visited. In most cases, maintaining a browser cache makes pages load faster because the browser doesn’t have to actually go out to the Internet to retrieve data. However, in some instances, it may be necessary to get the “newest” version of a page which may not happen if the browser is looking for old versions in the cache.

   If you are unfamiliar with clearing a browser cache, contact the Help Desk and they can walk you through the process. It only takes a few moments to complete (a larger cache will take longer to purge).

3. Try using a different browser. Blackboard is most compatible with Internet Explorer 8 and Mozilla Firefox (versions 3.6 or higher). **WARNING:** Google Chrome is not recommended as users have to been known to encounter significant problems when using some features—most notably the testing system in Blackboard.

4. Blackboard has a Help icon at the top of the browser window that will take you to EdTech’s Blackboard Resources page (http://edtech.mst.edu/support/blackboard). This may have information that will help answer your questions or lead you to a solution.
5. The best way to get help on Blackboard, especially if you run into a problem, is to contact the Help Desk at 573-341-HELP or online at http://help.mst.edu. The Help Desk can work with Educational Technology to find a quick resolution to any problems you may encounter.

**IMPORTANT:** When you contact the Help Desk, be as descriptive as possible about the problem! Please have the following information available at the very least:

1. The exact course where you encountered the problem.

2. The web browser you were using.

3. What steps you went through when the problem occurred.

Telling the Help Desk “it just doesn’t work” is NOT helpful and will require IT and EdTech to work harder to solve your problem.

Additional information about Blackboard 9.1 features can be found on our EdTech web site:

    http://edtech.mst.edu/support/blackboard

Please call the Help Desk with questions about this or any other IT issue at 573-341-HELP (x4357) or submit an online Help Request at http://help.mst.edu.