

Creating Links on the Course Menu

The course menu is the access point for all the course material. To provide students with a positive experience of navigating their courses, it is important that all faculty members use a similar approach to building their course menu. The course menu includes 3 mandatory subheaders: **About this Course, Content and Assessments** and **Communication**. It is a College expectation that the sections About This Course and Communication, have a similar look and feel across all of SLC courses.

In this guide, you will find a description of the links under each subheader with information on how to create them. The type of content indicated in parenthesis is described in the table below.

Course Menu

About This Course

Introduction

Blackboard Tutorial

Course Information

Content and Assessment

Weekly Lessons

Customizable Area

Communication

Email

Announcements

Calendar

My Grades

About This Course

- **Introduction (Blank Page):** It is recommended that this link includes a Welcome Message with the instructor's preferred mode of communication (i.e.: email, phone, etc.), office hours and location
- **Blackboard Tutorial (Content Area):** Empty course shells will come already populated with a video tutorial for Blackboard and login instructions for Lynda.com.
- **Course Information (Content Area):** This link must include a signed PDF of the Course Outline and Appendix A. Textbook information and other information judged necessary by the instructor can also be included in this section.

Content and Assessment

This section is the most important and can be customized based on teaching style and preferences. The content in this section is usually created using a content area. The content will vary depending on the type of course being offered such as face-to-face, web-enhanced, hybrid or fully online. In this section, you can find links to documents, lessons, assessments, various tools, websites, media, etc. To learn more, see SLC Blackboard Course Structure Options.



- **Please Note:** Faculty interested in using the Collaboration tools (Blogs, Discussion board, Wikis, Journals) can click on the link to open Blackboard Essentials: Working with Collaboration Tools.

Communication

- **Email (Tool Link):** This tool allows faculty to send email from their sl.on.ca email accounts to students without launching an external email program. Emails can be sent to individual users or to groups of users.
- **Announcements (Tool Link):** This tool allows faculty to post timely information critical to course success such as due dates, changes to the course syllabus, clarifications, exam schedules, etc. Announcement can also be sent to the students' email to ensure that students receive the information even when they are not logged in the course. Links to course content will show up in the announcement in the student's dashboard but will not show up in the email.
- **Calendar (Tool Link):** This optional tool provides students with dates for course-related events such as meetings, instructor office hours, exams and course items with due dates. It displays a consolidated view of all the student's courses. Course items with due dates automatically appear in the course calendar. Only instructors may create course calendar events.
- **My Grades (Tool Link):** Instructors can access My Grades under Course Tools but this it is intended for students only. In the My Grades section, students can see their results for all the gradable items, instructor's comments and, if used, links to rubrics.

Note about the Grade Centre (Control Panel): It is a College requirement that instructors post in the Grade Centre a minimum of one mid-term and the final grade for each course they teach.

How to create a link in the course menu

1. **Edit Mode:** Make sure it is ON.
2. **Add Menu Item:** Select the **+ sign** above course menu.
3. **Type of Content:** Select the appropriate type of content (see table below).
4. **Tool Link Name:** Give your link a name and complete other required information and click Submit.
5. **Available to Users Check Box:** Select when you are ready for students to see the link.
6. **Square / Diagonal line:** Means the link is unavailable to students.
7. **Empty square:** Means there is no content in that link.
8. **Eye icon (top right corner):** Allows you to **Enter Student Preview**.



9. **Contextual Menu (two downward chevrons)** (hover mouse over link to access)
 - Click **Rename** to change the link title.
 - Click **Hide/show link** when you are ready for students to see the link.
 - Click **Delete** to delete the link and its content.
10. **Drag-and-Drop Double Headed Arrow** (hover mouse over link): Allows you to reorder the course menu links.

Note: Try limiting the number of links in the course menu to create an uncluttered course menu for the students. Use content areas to hold related items and give your course organization and structure.

Types of Content to choose from when creating Course Menu Links

Content area	All course materials (documents, lessons, assessments, various tools, websites, media, etc.)
Module page	Can have a module page to include tools or display information, such as grades, alerts, and tasks
Blank page	Single page with content (i.e.: Welcome to my Course) with the title being the same as the link name. To see the blank page as the students see it, enter student view
Tool link	Create a link to any tool available under Course Tool (in course management area)
Web link	Create a link to a URL to provide quick access to a resource on the internet.
Course link	Create a shortcut to an existing area, tool, or item in a course.
Subheader	Links can be group together under a subheader. A subheader is not a link.
Divider	A divider is a line that divides the course menu. You can move it up or down.

For Blackboard Assistance, please Contact your eLearning Specialists:

- Carolle Boudreau (Brockville and Cornwall), 613-933-6080 X 2248 cboudreau@sl.on.ca
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