



Organization Models for Online Course Sites

The models described below provide *suggested* structure and appearance for online course materials. Use some or all of the components within any given model. Before commencing work on your course website, be sure to check with your colleagues to see if standards have already been determined for your program or department.

Model A (Blank) is a basic Blackboard shell, with default navigation controls and content areas similar to those you'll get when you request a new course site. *View a diagram of its components.*

Model B (Skeleton) adds weekly folders under the "Assignments" button. *View a diagram of the folder structure.*

Model C (Sample) provides guidance and examples to help you decide what to include in your course site. It augments the structure in Template B with:

- Content areas structured by weeks or units, with sample documents for things like objectives, readings, activities, etc.
- Discussion forums to match the structure of the content areas.
- Coordinated selections of button colors, links, and headings.

View a diagram of folder structure and contents.

Create Your Own Template: Create a customized template for a department or program by developing a course site to roughly the level of detail in Models A or B (perhaps even including sample generic documents like syllabi, lab procedures, etc.), then **Export Course** via the control panel to create a ZIP file. Post the ZIP file to a web server accessible to all course developers in the department or program.

Structuring Course Sites with the Content Collection

If your course materials are to be shared across sections, terms, or even departments, consider using the Blackboard Content Collection. *See an illustration of one implementation of this process.* Using this approach, most or all of the following functions are carried out within the individual Blackboard course site:

- **administration** (announcements, rosters, testing, gradebooks, etc.)
- **communication** (email, chat, discussion forums)

Some or all of the **presentation** components (lectures, documents, videos, hyperlinks, etc.), however, are stored within the Content Collection. Students follow links to the content and will likely

not even notice that it is housed in a separate area.

The advantages include:

- more flexibility in appearance and structure
- employment of traditional website development/maintenance methods
- common course content shared by multiple courses
- access by colleagues and potential students (depending on the permissions you set)

If you wish to explore developing advanced external templates, please contact the [Center for Teaching & Learning](#) or your online program coordinator.

Need help developing and managing online content? [Visit the Center for Teaching and Learning](#) to learn about workshops and online help.