

Blackboard creates one empty course shell for each course section (theory and lab) and, if you have to post the same announcements, course outlines, tests or notes in each course section, we have a few helpful tips, which will make managing multiple sections much easier.

Examples of Multiple Sections:

- One professor teaches several sections of the same course.
- One professor teaches a theory with several lab sections.
- One professor teaches two courses with the same content.
- Several professors co-operate in the creation of a course site to support many sections of a course.

Strategies for Managing Multiple Course Sections

1. [Copying Course Materials from One Blackboard Course to Another](#)
2. [Combining Courses](#)
3. [Link to a Common Website](#)

1. Copying Course Materials from One Blackboard Course to Another

- ➔ You must be the Instructor in each course to carry out these copying steps.

a. Copying Whole Sections of a Course

You can copy sections such as Course Information, Course Documents, and/or Assignments either from a current section to another or from a course taught in a previous semester.

Here's how you can do it:

- Open the course you want to copy from.
- Select **Control Panel**, then
- **Course Copy**, under "Course Options"
- **Copy Course Materials into an Existing Course.**
- Select the **Destination** course by clicking **Browse**.

(**Tip** – In the Search window, if you just click on *Search* you'll get a list of all your courses. To refine the search, choose the *Search By* field. Also, you could enter the destination course code- for instance, 08F_HOS2228_350)

- Click on **Select** to add the destination course to the copy dialogue screen.
- Select the components you want copied then click **Submit**.

Important:

- ➔ If you want to copy an online test, you have to select the content area where the quiz is deployed along with the "Tests, Surveys and Pools" option.
- ➔ If you copy an assignment created with the "Assignment" tool, the content area where the assignment link is available to students has to be selected along with the "Gradebook Items and Settings".
- ➔ If you copy the forums under "Groups", you have to select both the "Group Settings" and the "Discussion Board" options.
- ➔ Please note that the copying may not happen immediately. If the server is very busy, it may be a few minutes before you receive confirmation by email that your course has been copied.
- ➔ Do **NOT** select *Copy* repeatedly since this will result in multiple copies of the same documents.

b. Copying Individual Files

You can copy files individually by selecting the **Copy** button beside the file in the **Control Panel**.

- Select **Control Panel** → **Course Documents** → **Copy**
 - Select a course where you are an instructor from the Drop-down list
 - Click **Browse** to choose the location in the destination course where you want to place the file.
 - Select whether or not you want the source file to be deleted from its original location.
 - Click **Submit** and you will know if the copy went well if the message received will be "The item was copied successfully".
 - If you want to copy the document to a number of courses, you can click **Back** in your browser from the **Content Receipt** window to choose another course to copy to.
- ➔ **Warning:** Online tests and assignments created with the Assignment Tool can not be copied over using this process.

2. Combining Courses

Blackboard automatically creates a course for every course/section in the daytime timetable. If you prefer not to use the Copying Process described above to maintain multiple sections of the same course, you can have the courses/sections combined. To request a combined course/homeroom, please send an email to Blackboard Support: bbhelp@algonquincollege.com

There are several ways to manage the combined sections. Here are two possibilities:

a. Combine Course Sections and Leave Original Sections Unavailable or Disabled.

With this method, all course activity takes place in the new combined course and the professor uses **Control Panel** → **Settings** → **Course Availability** to make the individual sections unavailable to students.

- ➔ If you don't want to use/see the individual sections, ask Blackboard Support to have them disabled during the combination process.

This approach solves the content update issue: all postings are done once and all students in all sections have access to the materials. However, it creates a gradebook in which all the students from all the sections are listed in alphabetical order. This can be confusing at grade-reporting time.

- ➔ **Warning:** Blackboard doesn't offer you any way to sort students by course section in the gradebook of the combined course. However, there is a work-around: just add a new column to the gradebook and enter the section number besides each student. Then you can do the sorting by clicking on the arrow symbol above the title of the new column.

b. Combine Course Sections and Leave Original Sections Available.

Use the combined course to post the common content for all the sections, but keep the individual sections available for assignments/tests and group work. The advantage of this approach is that you retain a gradebook that reflects the official Algonquin section. This is perhaps most suitable for courses where many teachers are teaching many sections of the same course.

For Example: In the combined course, set **Course Options** → **Manage Course**

Menu so that Announcements, Staff Information, Course Information, Course Documents are on. In the individual sections, turn on Chat, Groups, Student Tools, Assignments, etc and turn off the buttons most used for posting the course material.

- ➔ Please note that each semester Blackboard creates automatically a program homeroom for each level of each program offered in the College. Also, these homerooms can be combined into a big homeroom which will contain all students enrolled in one particular program. This is a big help when all students enrolled in a program need to be sent an email at the same time.

3. Link to a Common Website

Another solution is to put common course content on another website (such as your staff web site on the academic server) and then point to that content from within Blackboard, by adding an external link to it.

This would be suitable where the course content is common, but you wish to use the communication and student tools within Blackboard for the actual coursework. If this approach looks useful to you and would like our help to implement it, please contact Blackboard Help – bbhelp@algonquincollege.com