

Taking online courses in the College of Business

New policy, new procedures

College of Business, Florida Atlantic University

The College of Business faculty has looked at the progress of students in online courses and made a few changes that should improve students' success in their online coursework. These changes have resulted in a new policy, which is in effect for the online courses beginning with the fall semester of 2006.

Requirements

Effective for fall 2006 semester courses, students wishing to enroll in online undergraduate College of Business classes must meet the following requirements:

1. Must qualify for the College of Business Distance Learning Program (COBDL), which means completing the following tasks at the COB Online Course Pre-Req Course site:
 - Passing DL Ready Exam or completing and passing the Mini-Course and corresponding Mini-Course Exam.
 - Accepting the Student Responsibilities in Distance Learning.
 - Completing a survey.¹
2. Not on academic probation.

Getting started

If you wish to qualify, here are the simple steps to get started:

- Go to blackboard.fau.edu and look under your Course tab.²
- In the Course Catalog section, select College of Business.
- Locate the course named "COB Online Course Pre-Req" and enroll in the course by clicking on the link labeled "Enroll".
- Read and follow the instructions.

If you wish to correspond with the DL coordinator, whose email address is available at the Blackboard site,

- The subject line of your email must be the following: COBDL.
- You must include your full name in the body of the email.
- The email must be sent from your FAU email account.³

It is important to follow instructions in online courses.⁴

¹ The survey asks for information that is important for online instructors, such as the availability of software to online students.

² If you try to log on to Blackboard and you are confident that you have typed in your username and password correctly, please go to the online [Support Center](http://supportcenteronline.com/ics/support/SRSplash.asp) (<http://supportcenteronline.com/ics/support/SRSplash.asp>) and submit a ticket to request a Blackboard account with the same username and password as your FAU ID. Use your FAU ID in this request.

³ Messages flagged as "Importance: High" or otherwise flagged will not be accepted. All email from students is important and you should not designate your email as more important than any other student's email. Also, return-receipts will not be sent in response. Inquiries are typically answered within one business day.

⁴ Accommodations will be made for students registered with the Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD). To insure security in the exam, the testing in this mini-course (as may be the case in many online courses), requires the student to take the exam on a computer in a monitored environment at the OSD facilities.

In addition to the required passing of the DL Ready Exam or the DL Mini-Course Exam, students must satisfy any other pre-requisites for the particular online course in which they wish to enroll.

About the Mini-Course

The Mini-Course is designed to provide you with some working knowledge of the technical aspects of an online course. We have designed this course to address recurring problems that students have had in online courses.

Everyone begins the course by taking the DL Ready Exam.

- For those students who pass this exam with a 70 percent or better, there is no need to continue with the course – you are qualified once you complete the Statement of Student Responsibilities and a Survey.
- For those students who do not pass this exam, you will have an opportunity to take another exam at the end of the Mini-Course to qualify.

For a student ready for online learning, the requirements may take less than 40 minutes. For a student who needs to learn about online learning, the Mini-Course effort may take up to 12 hours, depending on your skill level and familiarity with Blackboard, the course platform.

How to satisfy the requirements to take an online course in the College of Business⁵

Method 1: If you take the DL Ready Exam and score 70 percent or above, complete the Statement of Student Responsibilities, and complete the Survey – and you've qualified. In the Blackboard site, this means:

- DL Ready Exam
- Statement of Student Responsibilities
- Survey

Method 2: If you take the DL Ready Exam and score less than 70 percent, complete the Mini-Course (including passing the second-chance Mini-Course Exam with a score of 70 percent or better), the Statement of Student Responsibilities, and the Survey – and you've qualified. In the Blackboard site, this means:

- DL Ready Exam
- Statement of Student Responsibilities
- Survey
- Mini-course, *including passing the DL Mini-Course Exam*

Note: Once you complete all of the requirements, either through Method 1 or Method 2, it may take up to three business days to update your transcript to enable you to enroll in online courses. Do not contact the coordinator unless more than three business days have passed since your successful completion. Students waiting until the last minute to complete the requirements will not be given priority over any other students in this process. Plan ahead and everything will work smoothly.

⁵ No student on academic probation may enroll in a College of Business online course.



A Guide to the student using Blackboard® for the first time

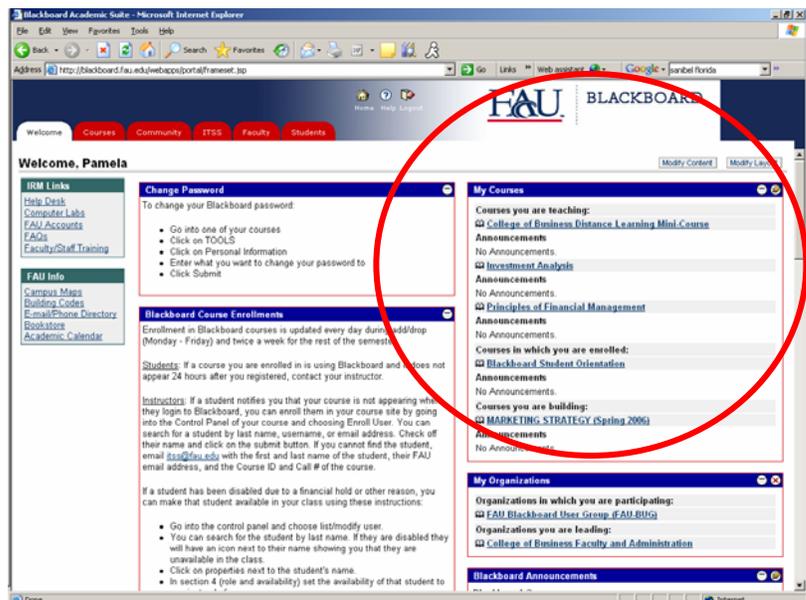
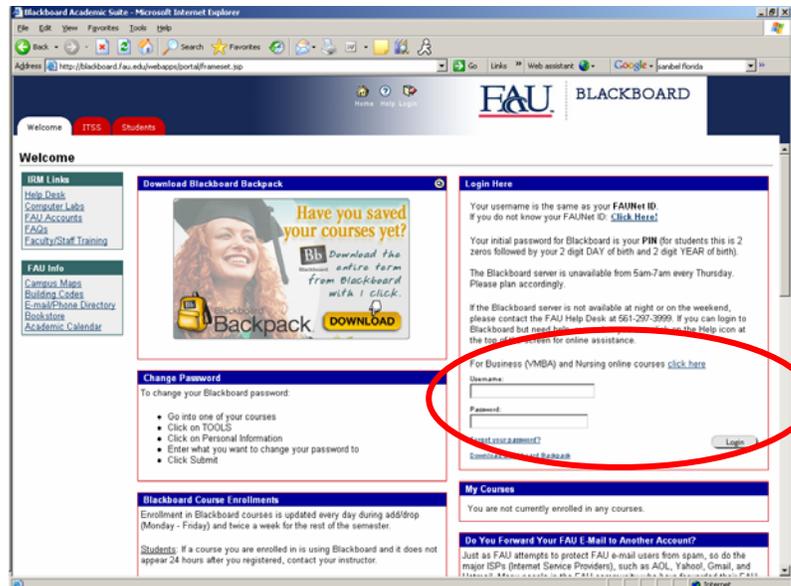
Logging on and off

1. Go to <http://blackboard.fau.edu>
2. Log in by using your Florida Atlantic University username and password. Click the Login button and provide your username and password in the space provided. Click the **Login** button and you will enter Blackboard®.⁶

3. You should see a welcome screen that has a set of tabs along the top and links of courses in which you enrolled in the box labeled My Courses. Once you are enrolled in a course that uses Blackboard®, the course will appear in the **My Courses** section. If the course is one during the regular semester, this course will appear in **My Courses** at least one week before classes begin.

You will see other useful information on this screen, including announcements and links to organizations in which you belong. You can modify the layout on this welcome screen by clicking on the **Modify Layout** button.

4. If you are self-enrolling in the **COB Online Course Pre-Req** to qualify for online courses,
 - Go to the **Course** tab after logging in. Look in the **Course Catalog** section;
 - Select College of Business;
 - Click on **Enroll** next to COB



⁶ See footnote 2.

Online Course Pre-Req to enroll.⁷

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Academic Suite interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the FAU logo and 'BLACKBOARD' text. Below this is a 'Browse Course Catalog' section. A search bar is present with the following filters: Course Name, Contains, AND Creation Date Before Mar 24 2007. Below the search bar, there is a table of courses. The table has columns for Course ID, Course Name, Instructor Names, and Description. The course 'cob_dl_prereq' is highlighted with a red circle, and a red arrow points to it from the right side of the image.

Course ID	Course Name	Instructor Names	Description
COB_CE_FP107	Non-Credit Executive Continuing Education Course (FP107)	Eric Smith	Non-Credit Executive Continuing Education Course (FP107)
cob_dl_prereq	COB Online Course Pre-Req	COB DL Admin	This is the site that provides the DL Ready exam for students wanting to satisfy the TSWEB requirement for enrollment in undergraduate online courses.
FIN4422_2006F_combined	Cases in Financial Management	Pamela Drake	FIN4422, #12187, #15339, #15340

5. The courses in which you are enrolled will be listed within the **My Courses** section. Simply click on the link corresponding to the course and you will be taken to that course's Blackboard® site. The material in the course's Blackboard® site is managed through the left-hand side menu that will appear within the course site once you link to the site.

General information about Blackboard

Blackboard® is course platform software that may be used to supplement a traditional, in-person course or to deliver a fully-online course. There are different tools, formats, and types of material that your instructor may provide in a course. Because the instructor has so much flexibility in designing online materials using this platform, you need to become familiar with the basic features of Blackboard® and then explore the particular site that your instructor provides.

Features that you may see in a Blackboard course site include the following:

1. **Announcements.** Class announcements may be posted regularly or irregularly. You may also notice announcements by the University that pertain to general Blackboard® use, downtimes for the Blackboard server, and security issues.
2. **Communications.** Communication may take place in different forms, including:
 - a. **Discussion boards.** A discussion board is a location on the course site that allows the instructor and students to post and read postings. These postings may consist of questions and responses or may be a discussion on a specific topic within the course. An instructor may establish discussion boards specifically for groups so that members of a group can discuss among themselves.
 - b. **Email.** Your instructor may establish a means for you to email specific persons in the class, the entire class, or your group using the Blackboard email feature.
 - c. **Collaboration,** which consist of a set of tools to enable synchronous communication.

⁷ This course should then appear in your **My Courses** section after you self-enroll. This course is the only course that is self-enroll. You enroll in all other online courses and other courses that use Blackboard® through the regular course registration process.

- i. **Chat.** Your instructor may set up a chat room that permits synchronous chatting among class members.
 - ii. **Virtual classroom.** Your instructor may lecture from the virtual classroom.
3. **Course material.** Your instructor may use a number of different types of course materials that include the syllabus, the schedule, lecture notes, lecture presentations, readings, and links to other material on the Internet. You may wish to right-click on the link to these documents so that you can save these on your computer for studying purposes. You may not want to do this with all of the material, but there is some value in placing a copy on your computer for later viewing, making notes, and printing.
4. **Exams.** Your instructor may require you to take exams online. The types of questions available are wide-ranging, including multiple choice, true/false, multiple answer, ordering, matching, fill-in-the-blank, calculated values, short-answer, and essay questions. The format and guidelines for online tests will vary among instructors, so be sure to read the instructions that accompany any online examination.
5. **My grades.** Many instructors permit students to view their grades throughout the course. When you click on the grades link (often, but not always, referred to as "My Grades"), if available, you will see the scores that you have earned on each graded task.⁸ Only scores and grades for graded items appear, so if you turn in an assignment or take a short answer test the scores or grades will not appear until the instructor actually reports the score or grade on Blackboard®.
6. **Other items.** Blackboard® allows a great deal of flexibility in presenting course material, which means that the instructor may provide games, glossary, blogs, and other material for the course. Take the time to understand what material is available and what tasks are graded tasks in the course. Items that you may see in a Blackboard course include:
 - a. **Assignments**, which provide instructions and links for assignments submitted through Blackboard®.
 - b. **Blogs**, which an instructor may use for discussions and commenting.
 - c. **Course Calendar**, which may detail deadlines and testing dates.
 - d. **Digital Dropbox**, a location for exchanging files with the instructor.
 - e. **Groups**, which include a set of tools to enable you to communicate with your group members, if applicable, including a **Group Discussion Board**, a **Group Virtual Classroom**, a **Group File Exchange**, and **Group E-mail**.
 - f. **Staff information.** Contact information for the instructor and any teaching assistants.
 - g. **Wikis**, which are editable content pages.

⁸ Be aware that an instructor may not present the weighted average of scores in Blackboard, so please refer to the syllabus of the course for information on weighting and the policies regarding the determination of your course grade.