



Blackboard

# USING BLACKBOARD

## STUDENT MANUAL



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# STUDENTS – GETTING STARTED WITH BLACKBOARD

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## SUMMARY

Welcome to the BlackBoard Learning Management System (LMS), a web-based application which allows you to access your course from any location with access to the Internet. This guide will assist you to get underway with e-Learning in your course.

BlackBoard is **secure** and specific to a particular course, and the learners enrolled in that course. It is a powerful tool, combining text-based information with communication tools such as e-mail and discussion forums along with new features such as calendar and online quizzes and tests.

This is the system you will be using to access the online course and all the learning materials, activities, resources, readings and communication tools you will need to do your course.



## GETTING INTO BLACKBOARD

BlackBoard can be accessed from the below website. You are encouraged to save this website address as a **favourite** or **bookmark** in your web browser.

# http://online.tekotago.ac.nz

This will take you to the **Online @ Otago Polytechnic** page, which looks like this.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the online@otago polytechnic website. At the top left is the Otago Polytechnic logo with the tagline 'A VERY SMART CAREER MOVE'. At the top right is the text 'online@otago polytechnic'. Below the header is a banner with the text 'Whatever your dream is, the sky is the limit.' and a background image of a cloudy sky. On the left side, there is a 'Links' section with the following items: 'Blackboard6 Login', 'Blackboard7 Login', 'Student Resources', and 'Instructor Resources'. In the center, there is an 'INFORMATION' section. It contains two main items: a 'NEW' announcement dated '14-07-2006' regarding a Blackboard upgrade, and a 'NOTE' dated '08-04-2005' about course migration and login details. The 'NEW' announcement states: 'IMPORTANT - Otago Polytechnic is in the process of upgrading to the latest version of Blackboard. Until the end of the year there will be 2 versions of Blackboard running concurrently. Please ensure you use the correct Blackboard login link. If your Blackboard course has been migrated from Bb6 to Bb7 you will be notified of the change by your lecturer.' The 'NOTE' states: 'NOTE: Most courses will not move to the new version until the end of the year. However if you are unsure of which version of Blackboard your course is being run on please contact the lecturer in charge of your course.' Below the note is a bullet point: 'Accessing your Blackboard course' with sub-points: 'To access your blackboard course you will need a username and password.' and 'Your Otago Polytechnic Novell network login and password is also your Blackboard username and password. Once you are enrolled in a course you should receive a confirmation of enrolment receipt that will contain your network login and password details. Check with your lecturer if you are enrolled in the course, but do not have access to the course in Blackboard.'

To login, select the **BlackBoard Login** on the **Online @ Otago Polytechnic** starting page. This takes you to the BlackBoard login page. You will receive a username and password, either on your enrolment invoice or from your lecturer.

The BlackBoard login fields **are case sensitive**. Numbers can be part of your password, but there are limitations on what you cannot use (spaces, punctuation etc). Type in your username and password into the spaces provided.



Welcome to **Blackboard Academic Suite**. Enter your username and password to access the system.

**Have an Account? Login Here.**

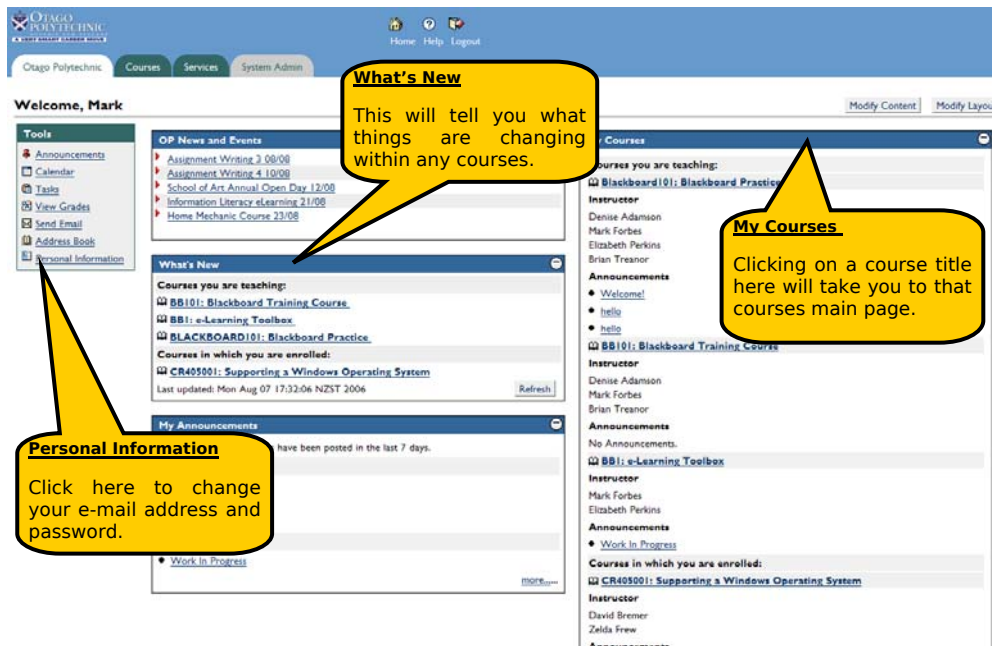
Enter login information here and click the Login button below.

Username:

Password:

Copyright © 1997-2006 Blackboard Inc.U.S. Patent No. 6,988,138. All rights reserved.  
Accessibility information can be found at <http://access.blackboard.com>.

If you have logged in successfully, the BlackBoard system will greet you by name and gives you some information about the courses that you are participating in.



The first thing you should do is change your **BlackBoard password and e-mail address** if necessary.

Clicking on **Personal Information** from the Tools panel allows you to do this.

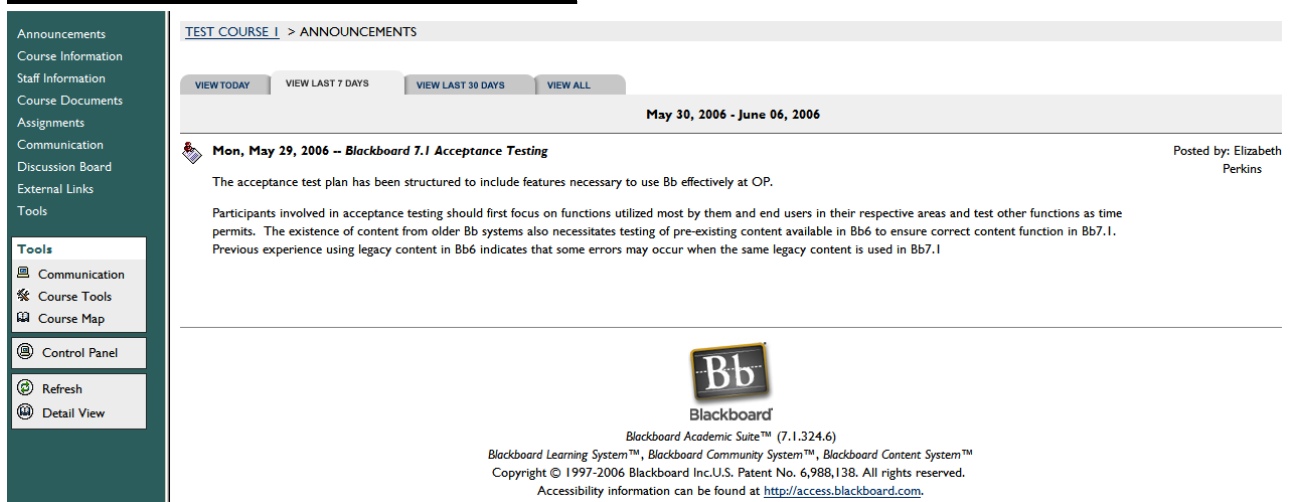
If you do not check your **GroupWise** e-mail from time to time (go to <http://email.tekotago.ac.nz> to check your GroupWise e-mail off campus) then you should change the e-mail address that BlackBoard has to one you check more regularly. Your lecturer may e-mail you from time to time about your course, so it is important that this is done.

To open a course, select a course title link from the **My Courses** panel (right-hand side).

When you have completed a session in BlackBoard, it is always good practice to log out before you leave the computer. This prevents others accessing your information and your course.

To log out, select the **Logout** button at the top of the screen, which is always visible within BlackBoard.

### WHAT YOUR COURSE WILL LOOK LIKE



Most BlackBoard courses will look similar to the one shown above.

## **COURSE STRUCTURE**

<b>ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>	Notices from the lecturer are placed here, with the most recent first. You can use the tabs to choose how many you want to view at a time.
<b>COURSE INFORMATION</b>	This is where information <b>about</b> the course will be. Items like Course Outlines, Lecture Timetables, etc can be found here.
<b>STAFF INFORMATION</b>	The Instructor of the course will have some contact information here.
<b>COURSE DOCUMENTS</b>	Resources, learning materials and activities can be found in this section e.g. lecture notes, PowerPoint slides, animations, case studies etc. These are organised in folders, Learning Units or as web pages.
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	This area includes email, Discussion Board, Collaboration tools e.g. chat and Group Pages. You can send email to each other in the online course without having to leave BlackBoard and use a separate email application. If your Instructor has set up Groups, you can also use a separate facility for Group work here.
<b>ASSIGNMENTS</b>	This area may contain worksheets, quizzes and tasks for assessments.
<b>WEBSITES</b>	Links to websites where you can access resources.
<b>TOOLS</b>	Various tools and the online help manual are kept here.
<b>COURSE MAP</b>	Course Map is available to all users of the Course. It gives an overview of the entire structure of the course.

Once you are within an area like Course Documents, an additional **breadcrumb trail** will appear along the top of the section, indicating your current location.

[SUPPORTING A WINDOWS OPERATING SYSTEM](#) > [COURSE DOCUMENTS](#) > [WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO WINDOWS XP PROFESSIONAL](#)

Clicking on any link will take you back to that particular level within the course, while an additional link will appear as you explore deeper in the course.

Once you have entered the course, take a quick tour by clicking on each of the menu options and briefly viewing the information inside each one. Your courses should contain similar menu options; only the number of options may vary.

## **ACCESSING FILES**

Files containing course information or content may be found in **Content Areas** called **Course Information**, **Staff Information**, **Course Documents** and **Assignments**. This is where you should expect to find the information lecturers advise you has been made available.

File links will be denoted by underlined headings with the file size in brackets e.g. [Digestive System](#) (38.452 kb). **The bigger the file, the longer it will take to download onto a computer.**

### **Recommendations**

- Use a **download manager** for accessing larger files. Programs like **Flashget**, **Free Download Manager** and **GetRight** can integrate into your web browser easily.
- **Save every file you access** (right-mouse-click, *Save Target As*) onto your computer, rather than view it inside the browser. If you need to print or make changes to the document, you can do this easily from an editor (like Microsoft Word).

If you have difficulty accessing ANY files from BlackBoard, **advise your lecturer** and ask them whether they can do anything to make it easier to get access to them.

## **ACCESSING AND PRINTING FILES**



Most people use **Microsoft's Internet Explorer** to access BlackBoard. However, because it is tied into the Windows operating system, it often causes more problems when accessing files from the BlackBoard systems. This document will quickly show you how to open files effectively so you can save or print them easily.

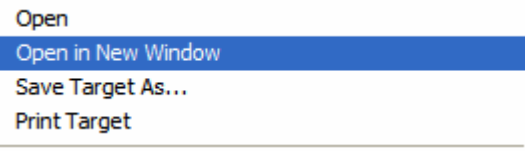


Users of other browsers (**Firefox**, **Opera**, etc) do not need to worry about these instructions. These browsers do not incorporate the application into the browser, and so the user has a lot more control over the file.

### **Word, Excel and PowerPoint Files**

#### **TO VIEW**

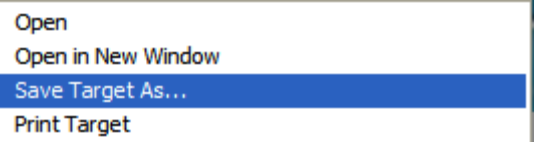
- Choose **Open in New Window**. This will force the file to be opened in a separate window, which will be easier to print from. If this is not done, Internet Explorer is still the main application, and will control printing (which is undesirable).
- From here, it is EASY to print the file. Go up to the File menu, and select Print.



Open  
Open in New Window  
Save Target As...  
Print Target

#### **TO SAVE**

- Choose **Save Target As...** which will allow you to save the file to your network space, or a removable disk.
- Click on the **Close** button (the **X**) in the top right hand corner of the window to close the file when finished.



Open  
Open in New Window  
Save Target As...  
Print Target

### **Adobe PDF Files**

PDF or Acrobat files are handled by the downloadable **Adobe Acrobat Reader** (go to [http://www.adobe.com/go/gntray\\_dl\\_get\\_reader](http://www.adobe.com/go/gntray_dl_get_reader)). Saving and printing these can be done from the Reader application.

Users of older computers may use the freeware **FoxIT PDF Reader**, which is available from [http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/rd\\_intro.php](http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/rd_intro.php) which is a smaller download size than the official Adobe PDF reading software.



### Other Browsers

For security reasons, **BlackBoard** recommends using **Mozilla Firefox**. You can obtain this with a small download (less than 5 megabytes) at <http://www.mozilla.com>.

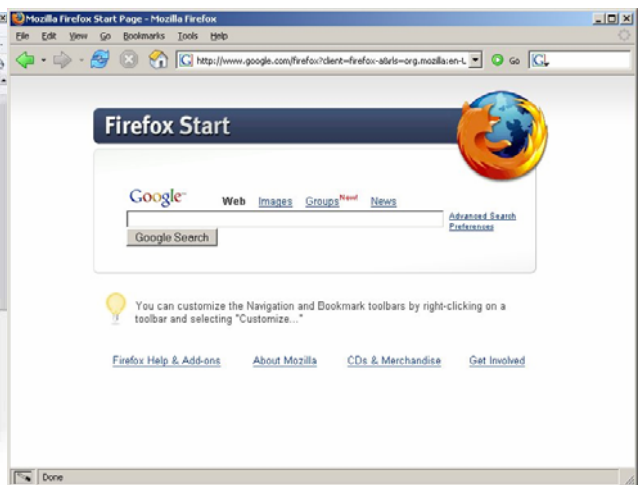
**Opera** is another small browser, and is especially good for older machines. You can grab this from <http://www.opera.com>.

**Netscape** is in its eighth release and is available from <http://browser.netscape.com/ns8/>. Netscape may include additional software including Netscape 8.1 Browser, Netscape ISP, McAfee, Rhapsody, Real Arcade and WeatherBug.

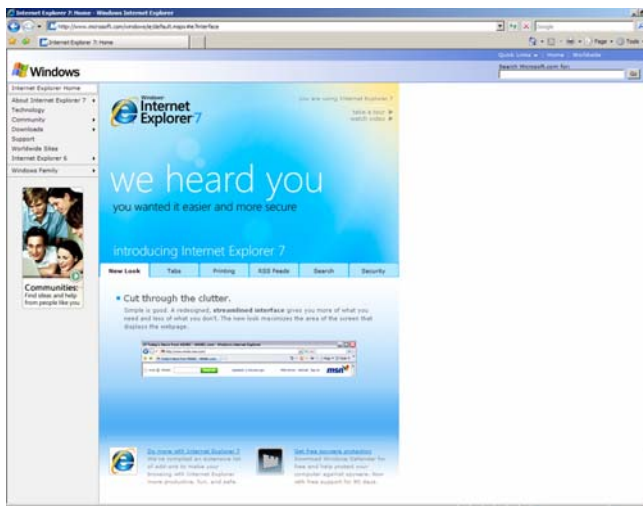
**Microsoft Internet Explorer** has been updated to version 7 and made it available from <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/> or from Windows Update. Internet Explorer 7 does have some issues with PowerPoint and Microsoft Producer files, so if you are having difficulty, try another browser.



Opera



Mozilla Firefox



Internet Explorer 7



Netscape 8.2

## **TIPS FOR STUDENTS FOR STUDYING ONLINE**

Learning online is a new experience for most of us. However it is a way of learning that is becoming very common, as more institutions and organisations use the Internet for distance learning.

Does being a learner in an online environment require new strategies for maximising your learning? We believe it does, and we would like to share some simple tips to help you succeed as a student on the Web.

In general, you should:

- Familiarise yourself with the Blackboard website for your course. What is on the opening page? How do you get to where you want to go? Find out the course schedule, assessment requirements, how to contact your online lecturer; expectations for using the communication facilities e.g. Discussion Board, email, collaborative tools, whether there is group work and how you should submit your assignments (post, e-mail, digital drop box) etc.
- Log in to your Blackboard course website on a regular basis (some people log on twice a day - you will find a pattern that suits you the best). Check the course Announcements page regularly. Regular attention to the course will keep you aware of course updates; of progress in discussion forums; of assignment information; and messages requiring immediate attention.
- Participate in any online discussions on the Discussion Board that have been set up for your course (remember, these discussions become your —classroom“ -through them you get to know your course colleagues and their ideas). These are text-based —conversations“.
- Typically one person will start the conversation; another will respond and ideas and information will be shared.
- Contact your lecturer whenever you have questions about any aspect of the course. You can also try to post general questions to your main Discussion Board, as your colleagues may have similar questions or the answers.
- Finally, a reminder that the Internet is a public place. Speak and behave as you would in any classroom, keeping in mind the greater potential for misunderstandings online.

## **COURSE TOOLS**

You can get access to any **Course Tools** by entering their BlackBoard course, and clicking the **Course Tools** button on the left hand side of the page.



[Address Book](#)

This allows you to create your own address book. It will not tie into GroupWise (the e-mail system)



[Calendar](#)

This gives you access to the Course Calendar, which an Instructor may use to post important dates.



[Digital Dropbox](#)

The Digital Drop Box is for sending files like assignments to your lecturer and then collecting it back once it has been marked.



[Glossary](#)

This gives you access to the Course Glossary which the Instructor may add complex definitions.



[Homepage](#)

This gives you access to the Homepage function.



[My Grades](#)

This gives you access to your own grades (if the lecturer is using the online Gradebook).



[Online Journal](#)

This gives you access to a simple journal that you can use to detail your learning progress. Only you and your lecturer will be able to access your entries.



[Personal Information](#)

This is where you can get access to the Information that BlackBoard has on you – also where you can change e-mail addresses and passwords.



[Tasks](#)

This shows you any Course Tasks that the Instructor has set.



[The Electric Blackboard®](#)

The Electric BlackBoard may not appear on your course. It is a simple **whiteboard** tool.



[User Manual](#)

This gives you access to the BlackBoard user manual, provided by BlackBoard.


To change your password, or check your personal information is correct, go into your **Personal**



**Information** section of the **Tools** menu option.

For changing the e-mail address, select **Edit Personal Information**. Do **NOT** change your name. Change the e-mail address to one that is checked regularly, if you choose not to use the provided GroupWise account.

For changing your password, click on **Change Password** and type in a new password – press Tab and type it in again. Click the **Submit** button – you should get a notice saying your password was successfully changed.

 **Personal Information**

- ▶ [Edit Personal Information](#)
- ▶ [Change Password](#)
- ▶ [Set CD-ROM Drive](#)
- ▶ [Set Privacy Options](#)
- ▶ [Set Visual Text Box Editor Options](#)
- ▶ [Set Language Pack](#)

**DIGITAL DROP BOX**

The **Digital Drop Box** (or the **DDB**) is for you to send assignments to your lecturer, who marks them electronically and sends the marked work back to you through the Digital Drop Box.

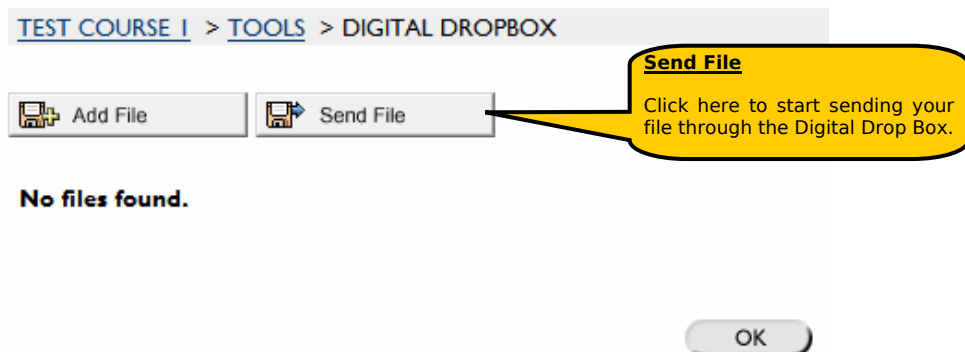
The advantage of using this facility rather than e-mail is that the date and time each assignment is submitted is recorded – the other advantage is that all assignments sit in the Digital Drop Box until the lecturer is ready to mark. If you have more than one lecturer, this makes it easier for all the assignments to be graded.

**How to Use It**

To send an assignment, go to the **Digital Drop Box** (through the **Tools** menu) and then click **Send File**.

This will go to whoever can access the **Digital Drop Box** through the **Control Panel** (your lecturers or any Teaching Assistants that they have appointed).

Once you have accessed the Drop Box, you should see whether any files are currently in there. Each DDB is specific to you.



Click **Send File**, and fill in the details. You will need to browse through to find the file you wish to send.

TEST COURSE I > TOOLS > DIGITAL DROPBOX

**1 File Information**

**Name**

**File**

**Comments**

**Comments**  
Add any additional comments in here. If you had an extension, it's good to mention this here.

**Name**  
Name the file. Make it something logical, e.g. Unit 2780 Assignment One

**Browse**  
This will open a Open dialog box, find the file you wish to send and click **Open**.

**2 Submit**

Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to quit.

Click the **Submit** button to send. Once sent, you should get a receipt saying that the file has been successfully uploaded. **The file will be accessible by the instructor and any Teaching Assistants** of the course.

**To upload or collect files from the Drop Box**

Go to your course and click on **Tools** from the left-hand side. Select **Digital Drop Box**.

The files that have been sent by your lecturer into the Digital Drop Box will appear. These are likely to be marked or commented upon assignments. You will note that each will have a time stamp or an indicator of when the file was sent. Right-click on the file's name and select **Save Target As...** to save it out to your computer.

**Digital Dropbox**

**Assignment 2.6.06**

test02, test02 (test02)

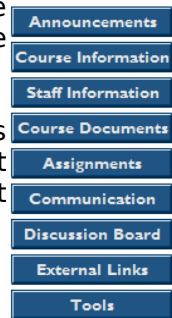
Received Wed Jun 07 2006 12:31

Comments: Attached is assignment due 3.6.06.

## DISCUSSION BOARDS

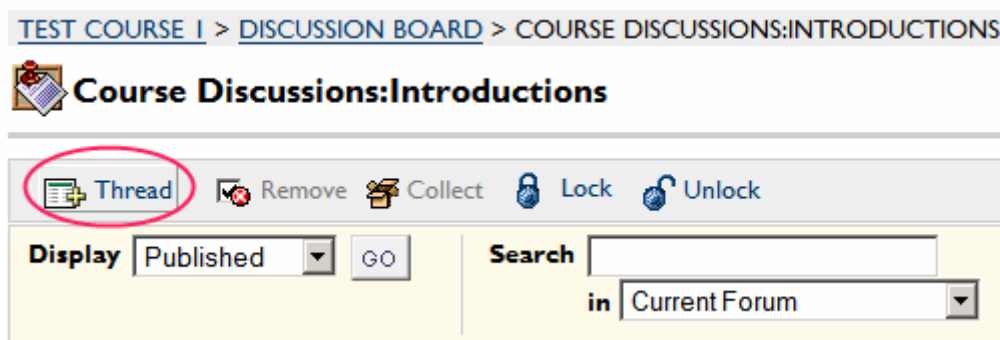
This area is used for online discussion where interaction will occur on-line with the lecturer and other students. Messages can be viewed and posted at any time like a notice board.

The difference between using the **Collaboration** and the **Discussion Board** is that the *discussion board* isn't in real-time – the up-switch of which is that people can participate in the discussion in their own time, whenever they wish. It also allows for more considered and detailed thinking to take place.



### Accessing the Boards

- Access the course, and go to the left hand side menu.
- Click on **Discussion Board**.
- Click on the name of the forum you want to take part in.
- Click on the **first message** to start reading through the forum posts.

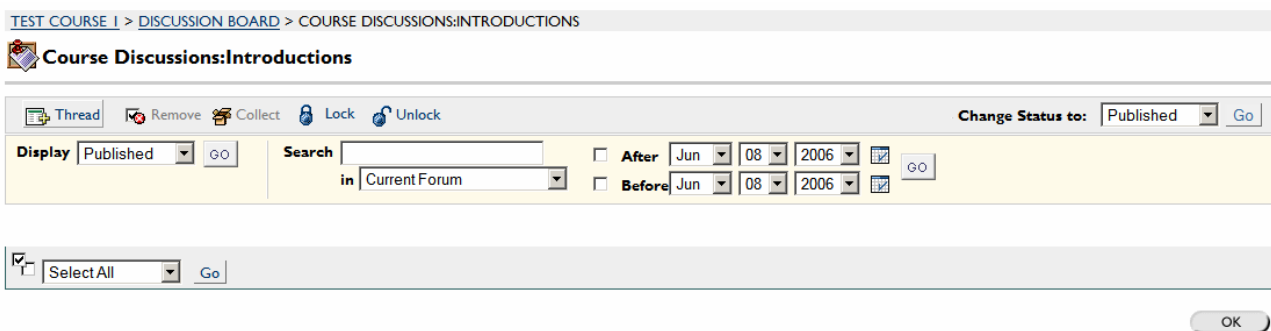


### Adding a Thread to A Forum

Your lecturer may have enabled this facility – you can create a new thread of discussion within the forum! Click on the **Thread** button (if it's enabled) and give it a name.

It is recommended that you start the comments by making one yourself.

Click on the **Forum name** (it'll be underlined and coloured **blue**). You should get a screen similar to the one shown next.



As you can see, there's nothing in the forum at present. Let's start a thread of conversation. Go up to the **Thread** button and click (indicated below).



### Replying to a Thread Post

Click on the **Reply** button in the subject heading to reply to the message below. The buttons are duplicated as well. You may be able to see the **Modify** and **Remove** buttons unless your lecturer specified that these options were available when setting up the forum. You can only remove or modify your own posts.

TEST COURSE 1 > DISCUSSION BOARD > INTRODUCTIONS > THREAD DETAIL

**Thread Detail**

Collect Flag Clear Flag

Search   After Jun 08 2006  Before Jun 08 2006 GO

in Current Thread

Thread: [Hello?](#) [Reply](#)

Total posts: 1 Unread posts: 0

<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Hello?</a>	Richard M Nixon	6/8/06
--------------------------	------------------------	-----------------	--------

Refresh  Select All Go

Subject: [Hello?](#) [Reply](#) [Modify](#) [Remove](#)

Author: Richard M Nixon  
 Creation date: Thu Jun 08 10:33:21 NZST 2006  
 Date last modified: Thu Jun 08 10:33:21 NZST 2006  
 Total views: 1 Your views: 2

Subject: [Hello?](#) [Reply](#) [Modify](#) [Remove](#)

OK

When typing in your response, you will be presented with a text entry box. You can **Cancel**, **Save** (so you can continue later on with it), or **Submit** your reply.

Once you've replied to the message, it will appear below the message that you replied to (see below for an example of this).

TEST COURSE 1 > DISCUSSION BOARD > INTRODUCTIONS > THREAD DETAIL

**Thread Detail**

Collect Flag Clear Flag

Search   After Jun 08 2006  Before Jun 08 2006 GO

in Current Thread

Thread: [Hello?](#) [Reply](#)

Total posts: 2 Unread posts: 0

<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Hello?</a>	Richard M Nixon	6/8/06
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">RE:Hello?</a>	Bob Woodward	6/8/06

Refresh  Select All Go

Subject: [RE:Hello?](#) [Reply](#) [Modify](#) [Remove](#) [Previous Post](#)

Author: Bob Woodward  
 Creation date: Thu Jun 08 10:36:35 NZST 2006  
 Date last modified: Thu Jun 08 10:36:35 NZST 2006  
 Total views: 1 Your views: 2

Hello right back to you.

Subject: [RE:Hello?](#) [Reply](#) [Modify](#) [Remove](#)

OK

**Buttons**

This is where the **Subscribe** button would be if enabled.

### Subscribing

Users can subscribe to a discussion thread, and be e-mailed when a new posting has been made. The ability to subscribe **MUST** be made available by the Instructor if they want it to be used. Click the **Subscribe** button to do this.

## **TROUBLESHOOTING**

This section is **not** exhaustive – students should let their lecturer know of any problems they experiencing while they use BlackBoard. Check out the online BlackBoard Help in the first instance, and then contact the relevant people for assistance.

- Q. The name of your course doesn't appear when you log into BlackBoard.  
A. If you're fully enrolled with Customer Services, contact your lecturer or the ISS HelpDesk.
- Q. Files are too small and hard to read when opened. They appear squashed in the BlackBoard page.  
A. For most Course Information and Documents, you should always **Open in a New Window** [right-mouse-click and select **Open in New Window** or **Save Target As** and open the saved file].
- Q. I can't get back to a previous page after opening a file.  
A. **Close** the window. BlackBoard will have opened a new window (for a Learning Unit or Assessment).
- Q. The Course I'm enrolled in isn't appearing in My Courses.  
A. Contact your lecturer or the ISS HelpDesk. You are not fully enrolled in your course, or you may have enrolled late.
- Q. I've lost myself in BlackBoard! How do I get out?  
A. Use the navigation at the top of the BlackBoard window. Clicking on **Online At Otago Polytechnic** will always return you to the entry point.  
A. Click the **Back** button on your browser.

**BlackBoard does use some terms and instructions that may appear strange to you at first. Don't panic. It does take some time to find your way around a new course website, like it takes a while for a new building or town. You'll soon figure out where things are and how to get to them!**

***We hope that you enjoy using BlackBoard during your studies at Otago Polytechnic.***

## **SUPPORT OPTIONS**

Technical Support is available from the ISS HelpDesk. Their contact details are shown overleaf.

### **Technical Support**

ISS HelpDesk

[helpdesk@tekotago.ac.nz](mailto:helpdesk@tekotago.ac.nz)

0800 762 786 extension 8039 or (03) 479 6039

When e-mailing, please include the following information:

- Full name
- Your Otago Polytechnic username
- The Course that you are enrolled in
- The lecturer who is instructing the course
- A brief overview of what help is required

### **BlackBoard Content**

Your first point of contact should always be your lecturer or whoever is running the course. Information for this should always be available in the **Staff Information** section of the BlackBoard course.



## CHANGE CONTROL DOCUMENTATION

Edition	Author	Comments	Date
1.0	Mark Forbes	Created for BlackBoard 7 users.	08/2006
1.1	Mark Forbes	Updated slightly.	11.2006

**NB: No changes are to be made to this document without updating the Version Control information.**

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