Understanding the Blackboard “Home Page” Content Area

Unless the instructor has made modifications to their Blackboard course, the Home Page typically is the first page students see when they enter the course environment. By default, every Blackboard course contains a Home Page tool link button in the course navigation.

Unlike the typical home page experienced on a website, Blackboard’s Home Page is a *module page*, where content pulled from other areas of the course is presented as links in distinct boxes. Some modules are simple tools, such as a calculator or dictionary widget. Other modules integrate with and present information from features of the course that the instructor may have enabled, such as a calendar of course events, announcements, or early warning system alerts. Using these modules is an easy way to automatically notify students regarding content or events as you create them. Students can use these modules to help manage their performance in the course.

Instructors can choose to **add or remove particular modules** to the Home Page, adjust their settings, and customize their layout on the screen. Students can’t remove or reorganize the modules that appear on their Home Page, but can personalize the function and styling of certain modules.

**Modules and Features**

**Alerts** – Displays notifications of past due and early warning items for all courses in which the student is enrolled. To work effectively, the instructor must enable the *Early Warning System* and *assign due dates to items*. Settings can be adjusted through the EDIT NOTIFICATION SETTINGS button. To receive up-to-date notifications in this module, roll your mouse over the ACTIONS button and select REFRESH.

**Calculator** – Displays a calculator tool that can be opened in a new window.

**Dictionary/Thesaurus** – Type a term in the text-box and click GO to access Dictionary.com or Thesaurus.com in a new window.
**My Announcements** – Displays links to announcements from courses in which the student is enrolled. Students can customize this area to display all announcements or announcements occurring within the last 7 or 30 days by clicking the “gear icon” and choosing the appropriate option.

**My Calendar** – Displays all calendar date events from courses in which the student is enrolled. The instructor must have the Calendar Tool enabled and create course events for this module to function correctly.

**My Tasks** – Lists all the tasks from courses in which the student is enrolled. The instructor must have the Tasks Tool enabled and create course tasks for this module to function correctly.

**Needs Attention** – Displays all items that require some type of interaction. For example, this area can be used by instructors to be notified when students submit tests or assignments that need grading.

**To Do** – Displays the current status (i.e. Due, Past Due) of a student’s assignments or tasks in a course. Instructors must assign due dates to tasks and assignments for this module to function correctly.

**To assign a due date to an assignment or task:**

1) With edit mode on, navigate to the location where you have your assignment of task stored. Click on the double-down arrows next to the name of your assignment or task and select EDIT from the context menu.

2) Look for an area called “Due Date” and enter the date and time the item will be due using the calendar scheduling tools. Click SUBMIT when done.
**Whats New** – Displays links to all new content that the instructor has added to the course (i.e. announcements, tests, assignments etc). To receive up-to-date notifications in this module, roll your mouse over the ACTIONS button and select REFRESH.