



UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

Creating Groups in Blackboard

Blackboard can be used for student group projects and other small group activities. Blackboard groups allow smaller groups of students to meet online privately to share and exchange files, send group emails, participate in discussion boards, and meet to chat in virtual classrooms. It's especially useful to be able to create groups if an instructor has multiple sections enrolled in the same Blackboard course, as each section can be set up as a group allowing the instructor a means to communicate with each section individually.

NOTE: Creating groups is a two step process. First you create the group, and then you add students into the group.

Creating a Group

From the Control Panel of your course:

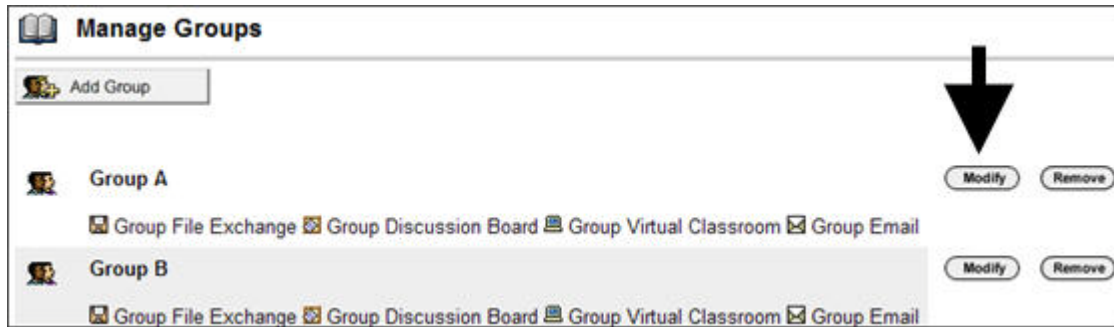
- Select **Manage Groups**.
- Select **Add Group**.
- Type in a name and description.
- Enable Group Options:
 - Group Discussion Board: This discussion board is only available to group members, unlike the main discussion board, which is for all students in the course. Instructors can also access the group discussion board.
 - Group Virtual Classroom: A 'live' chat tool, much like Instant Messaging.
 - Group File Exchange: Allows group members to share files. Students should be warned to avoid using identical file names, so files aren't overwritten.
 - Group Email: Allows members to send each other email.
- Be sure *Group Available* is set to 'Yes,' so the group is visible to students.
- Click **Submit**. Now, you will need to add students into the group.

A screenshot of the Blackboard 'Add Group' form. The form is titled 'Add Group' and is divided into three main sections: '1 Group Information', '2 Group Options', and '3 Submit'. In the 'Group Information' section, there is a 'Name' field with a yellow highlight and a 'Description' field with a rich text editor toolbar. The 'Group Options' section contains four checkboxes: 'Group Discussion Board Available', 'Group Virtual Classroom Available', 'Group File Exchange Available', and 'Group Email Available'. Below these is a 'Group Available' section with radio buttons for 'Yes' (selected) and 'No'. The 'Submit' section at the bottom contains the text 'Click Submit to finish. Click Cancel to quit.'

Entering Group Information and Group Options

Enrolling Students into a Group

You will now see your newly created group listed under *Manage Groups*. In order to add students into it, you must use the **Modify** menu. Detailed instructions for adding students are included in the next section.



Modifying Groups to Add Students

The Manage Groups Menu

Select **Modify** next to your group name. There are four menu options:

Group Properties

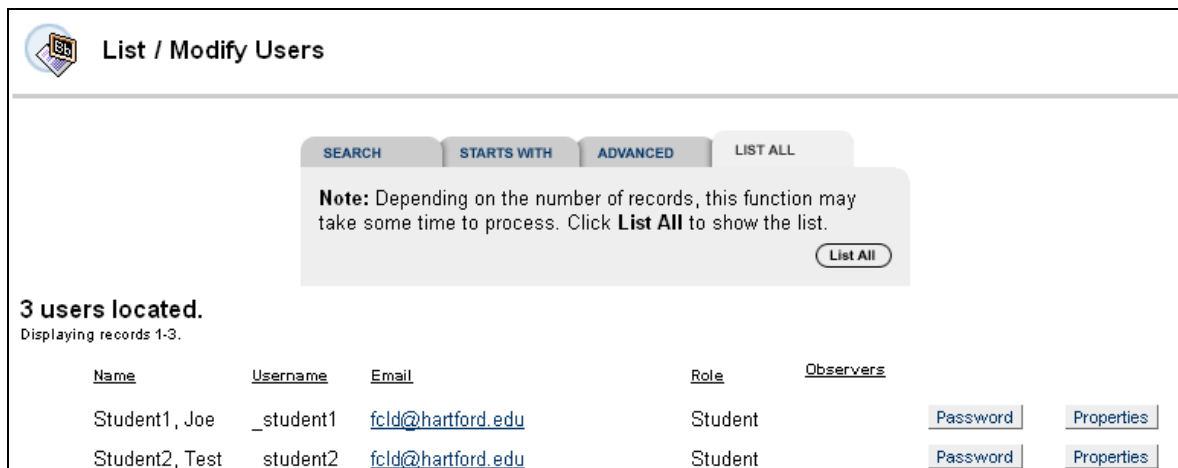
Use this to change the group name or the description, or to enable/disable communication tools.

Add Users to Group

Use this button to add students into a group. A search function allows you to find and add students. The quickest way to add students is to list the entire roster, and then select individuals.

- Select the *List All* tab, and then click the **List All** button. This will list all your students.
- Enable the checkboxes next to the students you wish to add by clicking on them.
- Click **Submit**.

NOTE: As you add students, keep a record of who is in which group since each time you **Add Users** to a new group and use the **List All** tab and button, you will see your entire roster again, i.e.. Blackboard does not keep track for you as to whether or not a student is already included in another group.



Selecting Members to Add to a Group

List Users in Group

When you select this option, all students currently enrolled in the group will appear. This is quick way to verify that you have enrolled students into the group.

Remove Users from Group

This option allows the instructor to remove students from the group.

- Select the *List All* tab, and then select the **List all** button. This lists the group members.
- Enable the checkboxes next to the students you wish to remove.
- At the bottom of the page, you will be presented with a removal confirmation. Type “Yes” with a capital ‘Y’ (it is case sensitive) and then click **Submit**.

NOTE: When you remove users you are also removing any of their uploaded documents and discussion posts, so be careful!

Starting the Group Discussion – Adding Threads

Instructors sometimes like to ‘kickoff’ the group discussion. To start a discussion for a group,

- To access the group discussions: **Control Panel → Discussion Board → Group Name**.
- Enter a group forum by selecting the group name. These forums were automatically created for each group when you created the groups.
- Select **Add Thread** in the upper left corner of the screen (or let students do this) and add a starter question.
- Use the **Reply** button to respond.

Student Access to Group Discussions

Students often confuse the main, full course discussion board with their group discussions. Be sure to provide them with clear instructions on how to access group discussions:

- Select **Communication** from the *Tools* box below the main course menu.
- Select **Group Pages**. Select the group in which student belongs.
- Select **Group Discussion Board**.

Check that Your Groups Area is Enabled

- From the Control Panel, select **Manage Course Menu**.
- Scroll down to *Communication*, and select **Modify**.
- Be sure it is set to available and then scroll down and check *Groups Pages* as well.

Making Communication Tools Available

Enabling Group Pages

Removing/Deleting a Group

To remove a group:

- In the Control Panel, click on *Manage Groups*.
- Select **Remove** next to the group name. Before the group is deleted, you will receive a removal confirmation question.
- Click **OK**. If you pressed the *Remove* button in error, select the *Cancel* option.

Getting Help with Technology at the University of Hartford

Faculty Center for Learning Development (FCLD)

FCLD provides consulting and instructional support to faculty and staff who are using technology in teaching and learning. The FCLD Faculty Lab in Mortensen 203a is available for faculty support and use and is equipped with instructional technology- related equipment including: PCs, Macs, scanners, and projectors as well as support staff. Faculty wishing to use the lab may contact FCLD.

Phone: 768-4661

Email: fcld@hartford.edu

Website: <http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/fcld/>

Information Technology Services (ITS)

ITS Help Desk – Computing Center

For general computer and Internet/network support questions (not directly related to the classroom but rather passwords, Internet/email problems, printer not working, Banner, Facebook, and grades).

Phone: 768-5999

Email: its@hartford.edu

Website: <http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/its/>

Media Technology Services (MTS) – Harry Jack Gray Center 111A

Faculty should contact MTS for assistance scheduling or implementing classroom technology (2-way video classrooms, Smart Podiums, COWS, laptops, etc.) or for scheduling and instruction for a wide variety of media equipment and resources like LCD data projectors, CD/cassette players, TVs and VCRs, digital video, and more.

Phone: 768-4643 (Main) or 768-4662 (Tech Line)

Website: www.hartford.edu/mts