BLACK RIVER TECHNICAL COLLEGE

2015 – 2016

moodle
USER GUIDE
for Students

About this guide

This guide was prepared by the Department of Distance Education & Instructional Technology at Black River Technical College in order to provide students with an overview of Moodle. This guide assumes students have basic familiarity with a computer, such as using a mouse, navigating operating systems and using a web browser.

Distance Education & Instructional Technology

Online Support

Help Line
870-248-4120

Email
online@blackrivertech.edu

Scott Wright
Online CTE Coach
scott.wright@blackrivertech.edu
870-378-5016

Shawn Long
Support Tech – Paragould
shawn.long@blackrivertech.edu
870-239-5150

Daniel Parker
Instructional Technologist
daniel.parker@blackrivertech.edu
870-248-4058

Regina Moore
Director
regina.moore@blackrivertech.edu
870-248-4049

BLACK RIVER
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System Requirements

Generally, the only requirement is a computer with internet access and a web browser. However, not all features are supported in older web browsers, so we suggest using the latest Firefox, Chrome, or Safari or Internet Explorer 10+. We highly recommend Firefox or Chrome as the BRTC Moodle site has been optimized for use with it. Some courses may require additional plugins and software, such as Flash, Quicktime, or Acrobat Reader. Most classes require word processing software, such as Microsoft Word. Each course syllabus should list specific software requirements.
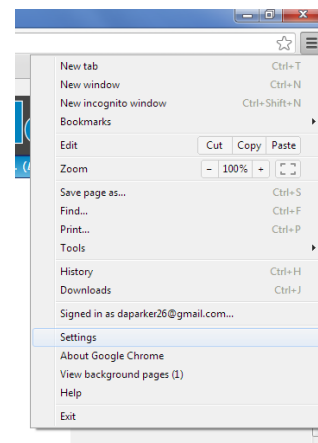
Pop-up Blockers

Pop-up blockers must be disabled for Moodle content to display correctly.

To disable the pop-up blocker in **Internet Explorer**: Click the tools menu and click "Internet Options". Now, click the "Privacy" tab and click the Settings button under the Pop-up blocker heading. In the address bar, type *https://moodle.blackrivertech.org* and click "Add". Click "Close" and then click "OK".
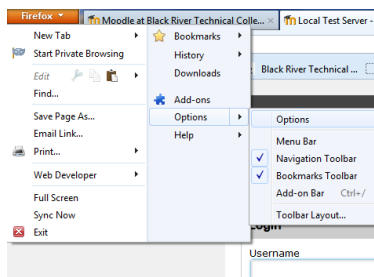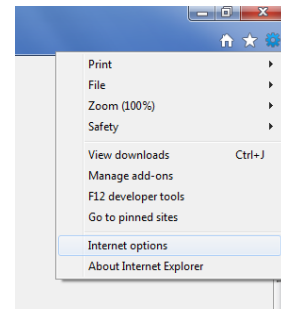
To disable the pop-up blocker in **Firefox**: Click the Firefox menu, hover over "Options" and click "Options" that appears in the new menu. Click the Content tab. Next to "Block Pop-up Windows", click "Exceptions". In the address bar, type *https://moodle.blackrivertech.org* and click "Add". Click "Close" and then click "OK".

To disable the pop-up blocker in **Chrome**: Click the Customize icon and click Settings. Scroll to the bottom and click the "Show advanced settings..." link. Under the privacy heading, click the Content settings button. Scroll down to the "Pop-ups" heading and click the Manage exceptions button. In the box that says "Add a new hostname", type *[*.]moodle.blackrivertech.org*. Click OK and click OK again.

To disable the pop-up blocker in **Safari**, click the Safari menu option and click "Block Pop-up Windows" to uncheck it (Safari doesn't allow exceptions).
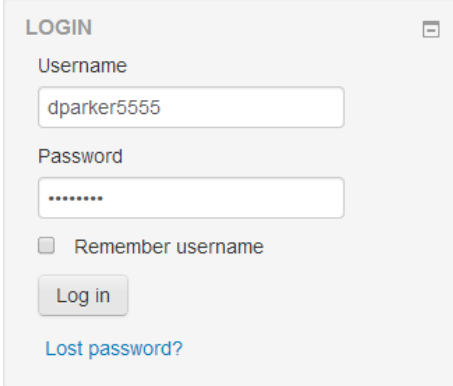

If your browser has a toolbar (such as Google or Yahoo), please ensure pop-ups are allowed for Moodle.

Logging In

To log in to Moodle, open a web browser and type **https://moodle.blackrivertech. org** in the address bar. Once the page loads, in the **Login** area on the left, enter your username and password and hit the Enter key or click the "Log in" button.

Your username is your **first initial, last name and last four digits of your student ID.** Your default password is your **birthday in MMDDYYYY format**. If your name is Jonathan Doe and your student id is 123-46-5555, then your username would be jdoe5555. If your birthday is January 1st, 1985, then your password would be 01011985.
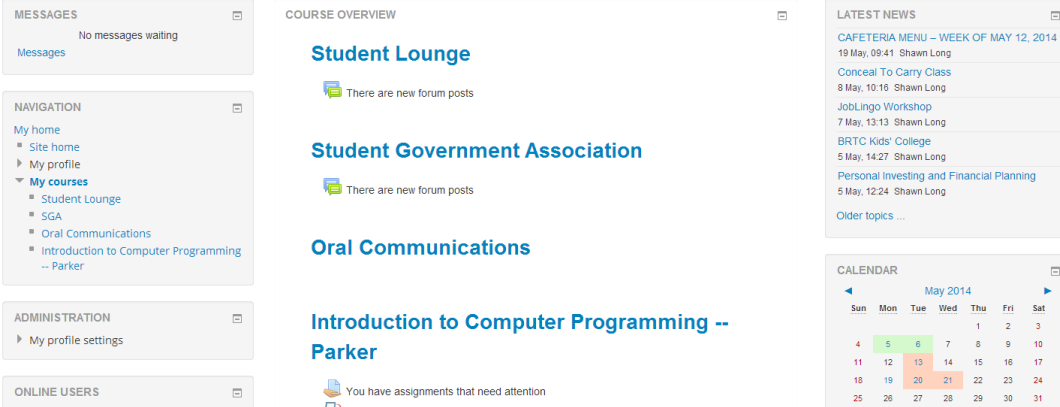
My Home

Once logged in, you will be at the **My Home** page.

Center Column

All courses in which you are enrolled will be listed in the center column. In addition to the course titles, you will also see notifications alerting you to activities or assignments that are due soon. You can view details for these assignments or activities by clicking on the notifications.

NOTE: Keep in mind that it is important to actually access your course by clicking on the course title and entering into the course view, rather than just clicking on the assignment.

Left Column

In the left column are the **Messages**, **Navigation**, **Administration** and **Online** users blocks. The **Messages** block offers quick access to the Moodle messaging system. The **Navigation** block will appear on most pages as you traverse Moodle. The **Administration** block provides options for editing your profile, changing your password, and changing your messaging and blog preferences. We highly recommend leaving the messaging preferences to their default settings. The **Online** users block displays users who have been logged into Moodle within the past five minutes.

Right Column

The right column contains the **Calendar**, **Latest news** and **My private files** blocks. You can read more about the calendar under "Calendar & Upcoming events". The **Latest news** block displays the current news posted on Moodle. **My private files** allows you to upload files to the Moodle server (not to be confused with submitting assignments, which is covered in "Submitting an assignment"). This is your own personal file storage on the Moodle server, up to 100 megabytes. Files can be accessed anywhere Moodle can be accessed.

Customize My Home
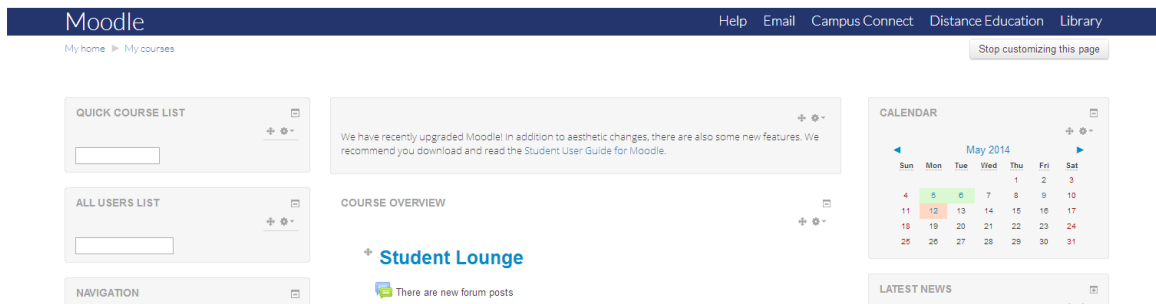
Your **My Home** page can be customized by clicking on the "Customize this page" button in the top right corner. This will allow you to add or edit blocks, or delete some of the blocks you do not want displayed. In addition, you can re-arrange blocks and courses to suit your preference. In order to perform these actions, you may want to familiarize yourself with Moodle's editing icons.

If you wish to add a block, locate **Add a block** on the bottom of the left column. Click the "Add…" drop-down menu. You should have a selection of different blocks you can add to your My Home page.
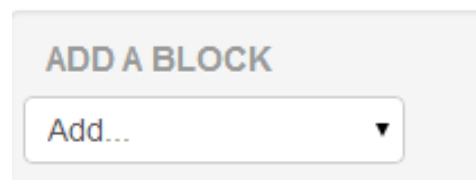
Once you are done, click the "Stop customizing this page" in the top right corner.

Updating Your Profile

Your profile is your identity on Moodle. All BRTC Moodle users can see it, including your instructors. Your profile also contains email information. To view your profile, click your name next to the "Logout" link at the top of the screen.

Editing Your Profile

To edit your profile, click the "Edit profile" link under **My Profile Settings** in the Administration block.

There are several settings accessible from your profile that will help make your use of Moodle more productive.

- **Email format**: You can choose to have emails sent from Moodle in Plain text format or Pretty HTML format. HTML format will include images and the Moodle color scheme in emails, but will be slightly larger in size.
- **Forum auto-subscribe**: If you select yes, then when you post a message to a forum, you will be automatically subscribed to that forum and receive email copies of all messages from that forum. You may want to keep this set to no; otherwise, you will likely receive a lot of emails.
- **Email digest type**: You may choose to receive all emails from Moodle in one daily message. There is also the option to receive either the complete message or just the subjects from forums to which you subscribe.
- **Forum tracking**: This is a useful option to enable. If it is enabled on your profile, it will highlight unread forum messages so you can easily see which forums contain new postings.

You can also change your user icon by browsing for a picture next to the "New Picture" field. Please keep the picture small, about 100x100 pixels and 500kb or less in size. Moodle accepts either PNG or JPG format. Again, remember that this profile is accessible to all members of the Black River Technical College Moodle community, and your teachers will see this picture. Please keep your image tasteful and only use an image of yourself. The same caution is applicable to your description.

Navigating Your Course

To access your course, click the name of the course in My Home. Once you are in your Moodle course, the breadcrumb links will appear at the top of the page under the top navigation links (the blue bar). The breadcrumbs are a trail showing the pages you have passed through to get to your current location.

Also, once in a course, the "Current course" link will appear in the **Navigation** block. This link is hierarchical and displays participants and badges. Click participants will display the list of students in the class, while badges will display available course badges, if any are used by your instructor.

While the Distance Education department has set some guidelines for course layout, instructors are free to design their course as they please. Therefore, your courses may not all look the same. However, typically each course is divided into either weeks or topics, with a general heading section at the top. The general heading section contains the name of the course and will typically contain important documents such as the course syllabus, tentative schedule, and news or announcements forum.

It is important to read all instructions and click all links for the current section in the course. Each link is accompanied by an icon.

Moodle is able to recognize some file types and will display its appropriate icon. These are resources, such as Word and PDF documents, that your instructor has posted and intends for you to view or download.

Like the above, the link next to this icon will take you to a resource, which in this case is an external website.

This is the icon for either a quiz or exam. The link next to this icon will take you to a quiz or exam within your course (more about quizzes under "quizzes").

This is the icon for assignments. The link next to an assignment icon will take you to a page which will allow notify you of an upcoming assignment. Typically, you will submit documents for grading here.

This is the icon for forums. The link next to a forum icon will take you to a forum where you can communicate with your instructor or other students (more about forums under "forums").

This is the icon for books. The link next to this icon will take you to a page displaying a collection of text or resources organized into chapters.

This is the icon for a directory. The link next to a directory icon will take you to a page with additional resources.

Forums

Most instructors use forums in a course to allow students to communicate with one another, as an assignment, or to post questions or concerns. If your instructor has put a forum in your course, the link on the main page will look similar to this:

 Discussion for Topic 1

NOTE: It is good practice to type forum posts in a word processor and copy and paste the text into Moodle's text editor. This will prevent you from losing your work if your internet connection suddenly goes out or other incidences occur. In addition, most word processors have spell checkers and help check for gramatical errors.

Start a new thread

1. Click the link to the forum
2. Click the "Add a new discussion topic" button at the top of the list of threads
3. Give the thread a title in the "Subject" heading
4. Type your post in the "Message" section
5. When finished, check your post for errors and click the "Post to forum" button at the bottom.


Be sure to change the **Subscription** setting to suit your needs. If you want to receive emails of every post to this specific forum, set it to "Send me email copies of posts to this forum." If not, set the subscription to "I don't want email copies of posts to this forum." Some instructors may have set the forums to force you to be subscribed or to not allow you to be subscribed, in which case this option will not appear. After you have posted, you will have 5 minutes to edit your post.

Reply to a thread

1. Click the name of the thread in the forum
2. Reply to a post by clicking on the "Reply" link in the bottom right.
3. The fields are the same for starting and replying to posts.
4. Give the thread a title in the "Subject" heading
5. Type your post in the "Message" section.
6. When finished, check your post for errors and click the "Post to forum" button at the bottom.
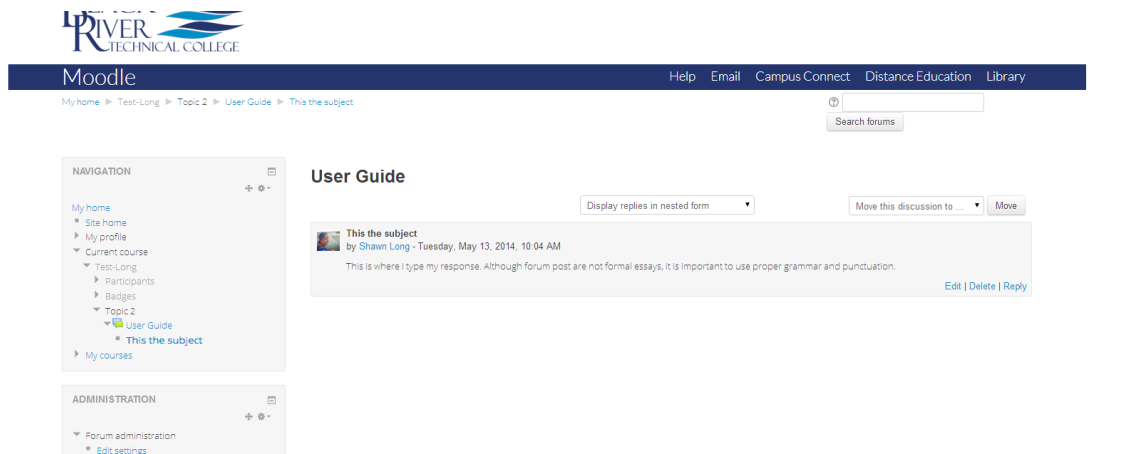
You can change whether you are subscribed to a given forum at any time by clicking on the name of the forum, then clicking the "Subscribe/Unsubscribe me from this forum" link in the Administration block under **Forum Administration**.

Some instructors will use groups. If you want to see the forum posts for a particular group, select the group name from the drop-down menu that will appear on the forum's page. Depending on instructor preference, you may be able to see only posts made by members of your own group.

Calendar & Upcoming Events

The **Calendar** is an interactive block which allows you to see events created by your instructor as well as campus-wide events. You may also add your own entries. In addition to the Calendar, you may also see the **Upcoming Events** block. The upcoming events area notifies you of events listed on the calendar and assignments and other scheduled events posted by your instructor or a Moodle administrator.
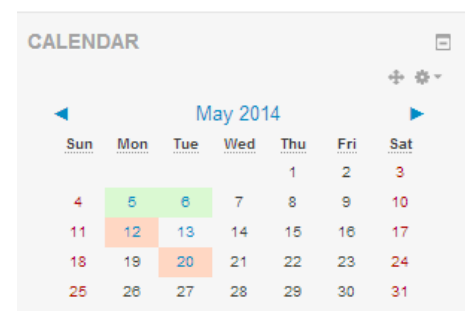
To access the Calendar, locate the Calendar block and click the month. In this view, you can see all of the events for the given month. You can shift through months by clicking the next or previous month adjacent to the current month. In the **Detailed month view** drop down menu, you can select to view events for particular courses or all courses. To add an event of your own, click "New Event" in the top right corner. Type the name of the event, a description and the time and duration. Only you can view your personal events.

To access the Calendar, locate the Calendar block and click the month. In this view, you can see all of the events for the given month. You can shift through months by clicking the next or previous month adjacent to the current month. In the **Detailed month view** drop down menu, you can select to view events for particular courses or all courses. To add an event of your own, click "New Event" in the top right corner. Type the name of the event, a description and the time and duration. Only you can view your personal events.

Moodle's calendar can also be integrated with other calendars, such as Outlook or iCal, by clicking into the Calendar block (click the month) and clicking the Export calendar button at the bottom of the page. Click the "Get calendar URL" button and copy the Calendar URL link. This is the link you will use to post into your other Calendar program.
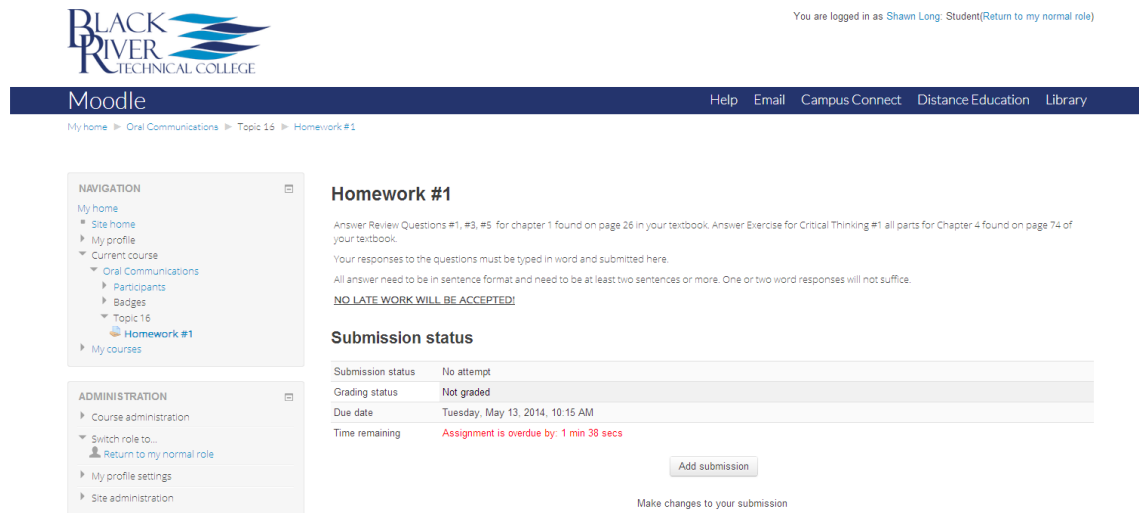
Submitting an Assignment

Assignment 1

The assignment feature in Moodle allows instructors to easily collect external documents from students. Instead of physically printing out a document and handing it to your instructor, you upload a file into Moodle for your instructor to view and grade. To

submit an assignment, click the name of the assignment in your class. A description of the assignment and a box showing the submission status, date and time due and time remaining for the assignment will appear.

Uploading Files

Click the "Add submission" button at the bottom of the screen. The maximum uploading size for files and number of attachments allowed to upload are listed above the submissions box under the **File submissions** heading. There are two ways to upload files:

- The easiest method is to locate the file within your computer's file system, click and hold down on the file and drag it to your web browser into the box that says "You can drag and drop files here to add them" (not available with Internet Explorer 9 and below), or
- Click the "Add..." button in the top left corner of the submissions box and choose "Upload a file" in the left sidebar. Click the "Browse" button next to the "Attachment" field. Locate your file within your computer's file system. Click open. Click the "Upload this file" button.

Maximum size for new files: 2GB, maximum attachment

Files

Ch5-homework.docx

Save changes   Cancel

You should now see your uploaded file. If you accidentally uploaded the wrong file, simply click the file you uploaded and click the "Delete" button in the pop up box. If there are additional files your instructor requires you to submit, repeat the process. Once you have uploaded the correct file(s), click "Save changes".

Once you are finished and have all of the necessary files uploaded, click **Submit assignment**. If the Submit assignment option is *not* available, then it is *not necessary* for you to do anything else and your instructor will be able to view your file. If the Submit assignment option is available, once you send your assignment for marking, you will no longer be able to delete or attach files. If you wish to continue, click Continue.

Quizzes & Exams

Chapter 1 Exam

Many instructors require students to take quizzes and exams within Moodle. To take a quiz or exam, click the name of the quiz next to the quiz icon. The first page should provide you with applicable information about the quiz, such as when it is due and the time limit.

IMPORTANT: The time and due date set is when the quiz must be SUBMITTED, not attempted.

Once you are ready to begin the quiz, click "Attempt quiz now". After you begin the test, you will see the question page which can contain several different question types, including multiple choice, essay, true/false, short answer or matching. At the top of the left column there is a block titled **Quiz navigation** that shows the questions you are attempting (and how many questions are left on the quiz). The question(s) you are currently on will have a bolder border than the others. Some instructors allow you to navigate through the questions by clicking the question number; however, some may not allow you to do this. If clicking the question numbers do not allow you to navigate, then the instructor only allows you to move sequentially through the quiz. Therefore, you will not be able to go back and answer skipped questions or change an answer. If the quiz is timed, the timer will be located at the bottom of the block.

When all questions are answered on a page, click the "Next" button. Once you have answered all the questions and are ready to submit your quiz or exam, click the "Next" button on the last page or click "Finish attempt..." in the Quiz navigation block. You will then be directed to a summary page displaying whether or not you have answers for each question. If you are ready to submit your quiz or exam, click "Submit all and finish".

Grades

If you have completed assignments in Moodle and your instructor has posted grades, you can check them by clicking on the **Grades** link in the **Administration** block. Once you have clicked on Grades, a table will appear with the column headings: **Grade Item**, **Weight (if weighted)**, **Grade**, **Range**, **Percentage**, and **Feedback**. The Grade Item is the assignment, the Grade is your grade for the assignment, the Range is the amount of points the assignment is worth, the Percentage is the percentage calculated based on your assignment grade and Feedback is where instructors may leave comments concerning your assignments.

ADMINISTRATION

▼ Course administration
    Grades

tem	Weight	Grade	Range	Feedback
Sky Diving 101 Gradebook				
Homework #1	-	100.00	0–100	
Quiz #1	-	6.00	0–10	
Course total	-	-	0–0	

If you have additional questions about your course in Moodle, the instructor is your first contact. However, the Distance Education & Instructional Technology office will gladly help with any Moodle issues you may have.