



Student FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

Students have about Blackboard at Saint Vincent College

- **Q:** How do I log in to Blackboard ?
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- **Q:** I downloaded a file and cannot open it.
- **Q:** I try to take a quiz or survey but it says I've already taken it.
- **Q:** My quiz grade is gone!
- **Q:** I try to access a page, but I get an error "HTTP/1.1 ... The server encountered an internal error ... "
- **Q:** I have been using the system successfully all semester, but I am now having problems logging in.
- **Q:** I sent a file to my instructor using the Digital Dropbox and they claim that they have not yet received it! What do I do?

If you find that an important question you have about Blackboard is not covered in this document, please let us know.

For all general questions about using your web-browser, connecting to the Internet, using your email etc., please contact the Help Desk at x4357.

Q: How do I log in to Blackboard?

A: Point your browser to the Blackboard server at <http://cms.stvincent.edu> - Click the Login button, then enter your Blackboard Username and Password in the dialog box that appears. You will then see a page with a listing of Blackboard courses for the professors who use Blackboard as well as recent announcements and other tools or resources. Click on any of the courses to enter that Blackboard site. **Note:** If you are not enrolled in a class that is using Blackboard and want to get a glimpse of some other course site, try logging in using the "Preview" feature. Click on the login button, and then on the lower left hand side of the screen you will see a button labeled "Preview". Click on the "Preview" button, and then on the tab labeled "Courses" and you can now browse through any of the courses on the system that have "Guest Access" enabled. Certain areas of the sites may or may not be accessible to you, depending on the instructor.

Q: What username and password should I use?

A: Blackboard accounts use **firstname.lastname** for the username and **firstname.lastname** for the Blackboard Password. When we create your Blackboard account, we attempt to use the same naming convention of the local area network login, and initially, the new blackboard password will be the same as the Blackboard username. You should change the Blackboard password to something more secure right away. When you are later enrolled in other Blackboard courses, you will be using the same account and password for all of them, and you will continue to use the password you chose. If you forget your password, you should visit the Help Desk with your Student ID. They can reset your Blackboard password for you. But *please* first try to access Bb on another computer and check the caps lock key on your keyboard.

Q: How do I change my Blackboard password?

A: Choose Tools in Blackboard, and then select **Personal Information**. Enter your new password twice, and then click Submit. Once you have changed your password, this will affect all of your courses that you are enrolled in. Changing your Blackboard password will not affect your network (email) password or web registration login or password.

Q: The BB system does not let me in. What's wrong?

A: Make sure you are using the correct username and password. The password is case-sensitive. If it is still not working, **visit the Help Desk and ask them to reset your password**. Change the password again after logging in. **Do not use your network password to access Blackboard. It will not work!**

Q: Why do I get a page saying "Not Authorized"?

A: Blackboard gives full access to each site only to those enrolled in the respective course. If you entered another course site, you are visiting it as a guest in "Preview" mode with very limited access. To see exactly what courses you are currently enrolled in, access Blackboard and enter your Blackboard Username and Password. The page that appears will have a listing of all the courses in which you are currently enrolled. If you think you should be enrolled in a certain course but that course does not appear in the list, see your instructor to be added to the course.

Q: What kind of browser do I need to use Blackboard?

A: For full functionality, you need a browser that supports JavaScript. Your browser must also support frames in order to view Blackboard sites. Furthermore, if your course site uses the Java chat tool, you must be using a 4.x browser or newer. In general, if you are experiencing strange errors while browsing web pages and you are using an old browser (version 3.x or earlier), it is probably a good idea to upgrade your web browser.

Q: How do I get help for Blackboard?

A: Students experiencing problems should consult their instructor first for most Blackboard related problems. If you are having a serious problem with Blackboard, make sure to tell your instructor the following details:

- What exactly you were trying to do
- Any error messages you got. Literally!
- When exactly this occurred.
- What browser you were using, and what version (use **Help > About** in your browser to find out what version you have)
- What operating system
- What ISP you are using (on campus or at home?)\
- Any other clues related to your problem

Your instructor can then refer you to the help desk as offering suggestions or may contact the campus Blackboard administrator (Patty Babusci at extension 2420) with these details, thus giving us a basis for troubleshooting the issue. You may also find it helpful to read some of the documentation on the Saint Vincent College Website related to Blackboard.

Q: How do I upload a file?

A: In Dropbox or Discussion board click the **Browse** button. Select a file from your hard disk. **Note:** The filename should not contain spaces or special characters, be under 20 characters in length, and have the proper three-letter extension indicating the file's type, so others can open it.

Q: I cannot upload a file in the student dropbox. (Digital Dropbox)

A: Make sure you are using a supported and working browser. Older browsers do not support http-uploading. For commuters, some ISPs also disallow file-uploading (in that case, consider changing ISPs). Avoid spaces in your filenames and keep your filenames reasonably short (under 20 characters). Obviously, special characters such as forward slashes or colons cannot be used in filenames on the web, as they serve to separate directories on some operating systems. **Tip:** stick to letters, numbers, and underscores, and you will never have trouble. If you are on a modem connection and are uploading a large file, you may be experiencing a timeout problem. Large files will need to be uploaded from a faster connection, e.g. on campus from a lab. You may also be abandoning your upload yourself by clicking somewhere else before the upload has completed. Make sure to wait until you see the receipt page confirming that your upload went through, otherwise the file will be missing.

Q: I downloaded a file and cannot open it.

A: If the file does not open automatically (i.e. if you get a dialogue-box saying that your browser does not know what to do with this kind of file), simply save it to your hard drive. Then try opening it in various applications, so next time you get this type of file, you know what application to pick in the browser's dialogue box. Use this method in particular if the file does not have the proper three-letter DOS-extension. If your browser does not offer you the saving option, but launches some application that cannot properly open the file, simply right-click the link to the file that Blackboard provides at the top and choose "*Save Target/Link As.*"

Q: I try to take a quiz or survey but it says "Sorry...you already took this assessment on..."

A: If you look at a survey or a quiz, then press your browser's back button, or you start to take the quiz and do not submit it for whatever reason, the next time you try to take this quiz you will get a message from the Blackboard server

Sorry...you already took this assessment on ...

For fairness reasons, you are typically only allowed to take a quiz once and you are not allowed to see a quiz before taking it for credit. If you feel you are getting this message incorrectly, contact your instructor giving all pertinent details. If indeed you are getting this message in error, your instructor can reset your quiz attempt and you can take the quiz again. **Note:** All transactions on Blackboard are logged, recorded and searchable.

Q: My quiz grade is gone!

A: Situation: you successfully took a quiz and got a grade, but later notice that your grade is gone and only an exclamation mark shows up under *Check Grades*. This happens when the quiz is set to allow multiple submissions and you later look at it again without submitting it, e.g. because you want to print it. This will establish a new attempt at the quiz, erasing all your previous answers. To see your submitted quiz and compare your answers, click on your grade within *Check Grades* instead - that is safe.

Q: I try to access a page but I get an error "HTTP/1.1 ... The server encountered an internal error ... "

A: If this happened when you were trying to submit a quiz, chances are you are using Netscape and inadvertently re-loaded the quiz, causing the submission to fail. Netscape re-loads a page when re-sizing the browser window, viewing the page source, or trying to print or save the page. Thus you must not do those when taking quizzes, or simply use MS Internet Explorer (but still avoid reloading!).

If you were in the middle of taking a quiz or survey, inform your instructor via email as soon as possible. Your instructor can clear your quiz attempt and allow you to take the quiz again. You may also have been accessing a page while the Internet connection was experiencing excessive congestion.

Q: I have been using the system successfully all semester, but I am now having problems logging in.

A: We have found that this strange behavior often occurs when users have not cleared their browsers "cache" after extended periods of use. If you begin experiencing this behavior and are still able to log on from on campus machines, or if you know that you have not changed your password, then follow the steps to clear your browser's cache:

Q:I sent a file to my professor using the Digital Dropbox and they claim that they have not yet received it! What do I do!

A: There are two buttons in the student view of the digital dropbox. One button is labeled "Add File", while the other button is labeled "Send File". Using the "Send File" button is what actually transfers the file from the student dropbox to the instructor dropbox. Please try again and be sure to use the "Send File" button.