Master Course Guidelines

Use a Generic Banner

Master courses are meant to be a location where content can be organized, updated, and shared between multiple instructors. For that reason, it is best to keep Master course shell banners generic (course ID with no section number and course name only, do not include an instructor name). When a course copy is made, this means that every course copy will receive a generic banner. If the individual instructor of the term course wants a banner with their name on it, they can replace it in their term course after the copy from the Master is made.

A template for a generic course banner can be found here: https://blackboard.odessa.edu/bbcswebdav/xid-8802439_1

Date/Password Restrictions

In order to make Master content as easy to use as possible, it is important that ALL date and restriction settings are removed from course items.

Start/End Dates and Due Dates:

- **Check your text!** – Typically courses will have places for a course schedule or a course calendar and these items will contain dates that are specific to the semester. In a Master course, these dates need to be blanked out completely! It is important that you read through ALL areas of your course where you have added text and make sure that there are no references to specific dates anywhere. Specific dates can be added to the course AFTER content from the Master has been copied.

- **Start / End Dates** - Start dates and end dates from course items (whether it be content, tests, discussion links, media, etc.) needs to be **COMPLETELY REMOVED**. Keep in mind that Master courses *do not have student enrollments* so there is no need to restrict items with dates. It is difficult and sometimes frustrating for an instructor (especially a new adjunct) to receive a copy of content that has old date settings to have to update when they aren't familiar with the content. The best thing to do is set your start/end dates on items AFTER the content has been copied.

- **Due Dates** – Different assessment tools in Blackboard can allow for instructors to set a "Due Dates" on their assignments or on manually created columns in the Grade Center. This due date is informational for students and shows up for them on the BB Calendar and also in the "My Grades" area of the course. It is very important that ALL DUE DATES ARE REMOVED from Master course material. Having old due dates set on assignments can be incredibly frustrating and confusing for students, especially if the instructor that received the content wasn't aware that there were any that needed to be changed. It is best to provide a clean date-less copy of content from the Master at all times.

The easiest way to remove all dates from your Master Course is to run Blackboard's *Date Management* tool. Make sure to enable *Date Management* through the *Customization* area (*Tool Availability*). Click *Date Management* under *Course Tools*, select *List All Dates for Review*, and click *Start*. Blackboard will process a list of all dates (Announcement Dates, Due Dates, and Start/End Dates and Availability Dates). Click on the pencil icon to edit/remove dates for each item.

Passwords

- **Passwords** – Tests in Blackboard have a password setting. Sometimes tests are given passwords to allow students to take a test early or late. When a course copy is made, all test settings (including passwords) come over with the copy. **It is important to REMOVE ALL TEST PASSWORDS in your Master content.** If any of the tests in the course use Respondus Lockdown Browser, make sure to check this area too as it has the potential for storing passwords.

Availability

- **Everything needs to be available** – Some items in Blackboard may not have date restrictions on them. However, they may have their availability toggled to OFF. Make sure that ALL items in a master course that will be seen by students is set to AVAILABILITY ON. If there is content that needs to be hidden from students using this setting, it can be made after content has been copied.

Keep it Clean and Organized

Master courses are not meant to be a "catch-all" space for any and all historical data for a course. Master courses need to be kept clean, organized, and up to date. Some courses I've seen have over 400 tests in the "Tests" area of a course because it is a collection of all tests from all instructors for the last several semesters. Some courses have double or triple (or more!) copies of discussion forums, and most of them aren't even being used. This is a nightmare mess – especially for anyone that receives the content and has no idea what to do with all of it. Please make an effort to keep your Master courses clean and current.

Best practices for general content in Course Masters in Blackboard:
- If your publisher content changes, remove all old publisher content and add in the new. Do not leave old content hanging around in a course.
- Remove duplicate discussion forums, journals, and blogs
- Remove discussion forum posts, journal and blog entries from previous semesters.
- Delete duplicates of tests/quizzes and pools from the *Tests, Surveys, and Pools* area.

The same message goes for the Grade Center of a course. Make sure that this area is clean, organized, and free of duplicate columns or hidden columns. We've had quite a bit of confusion this past semester over instructors receiving content from a Master course that has hidden or duplicated columns. The easiest way to fix this problem is at the source! **DO NOT HIDE COLUMNS**. If you don't need them, remove them. There are very few circumstances where hiding columns is necessary.

Best practices for Grade Center in Course Masters in Blackboard:
- Delete duplicate/unused **Categories** (**Manage –> Categories**)
- Verify that no columns are hidden (**Manage –> Column Organization**)
- Delete duplicate/unnecessary columns

The navigation panel of your course must be clean and uncluttered. Verify that the navigation panel uses the approved template buttons only. Be sure to remove any old buttons that may still remain from old courses. The approved template consists of the following buttons:

- Announcements
- Faculty Information (be sure to click **Permit Guests** to ensure that entire syllabus is visible to guests for HB 2504 compliance)
- Course Information (do not click **Permit Guests** here!)
- ----------------------
- Coursework
- My Grades
- ----------------------
- Communication
- OC Resources

Any other buttons must be approved by your Department Chair/Associate Dean/Dean

Video / Media Usage

Video is a great addition to any course. When using video, it is important to keep the following in mind:

Accessibility

Accessibility with video is VERY IMPORTANT! If you are going to provide video with your course, you need to make every effort to provide captions on the video (if self-created) or make sure that the video you are sharing is a captioned video (especially if coming from YouTube or some other public video sharing source). If captions are not provided for a video, a full-text transcript should be made and provided along with the video. This is an area that we are about to start focusing on with great detail – so it is best that you start planning NOW. We will be looking for videos with transcripts, and if they do not have transcripts, it is likely that you will be asked to take them down until you can provide one.

TechSmith Videos

Many Master course shells contain TechSmith Relay links. We encourage you to continue using your TechSmith Relay links, but need you to understand the following:

There are two different ways to link TechSmith videos: Direct Link and LTI Link. Direct links require students to create a TechSmith account and to log in to view content. LTI links allow students to access TechSmith video by authenticating them with their Blackboard credentials (no need for them to create an account or to have to

provide a login). Direct links look like normal weblink icons. LTI links have a blue square with a white R beside them. (See my images below)

Direct Web Link to TechSmith Video *(Students have to have an account and log in)*	Chapter 1 Synopsis - Body Enabled: Statistics Tracking
LTI Video Link to TechSmith Video *(Students do not have to create an account or log in)*	**R** Copyright on Campus

LTI LINKS WILL NOW PERSIST THROUGH COURSE COPY! A recent change to our TechSmith LTI now allows TechSmith Relay LTI links to persist through course copy. Originally TechSmith links would break when course content was copied and would require instructors to relink all videos once content was moved. This, thankfully, is no longer an issue! *It is very important that you review ALL of your Master courses for old TechSmith Relay links. The old LTI tool was removed, which has made all old TechSmith Relay links non-working links. You will need to re-establish your TechSmith Relay LTI links with the new TechSmith LTI (Tools → TechSmith Relay). Once you do, videos created with this LTI linking will carry through on course copies!*

DIRECT LINKS MAY NOT GIVE YOU ANALYTICS. A direct link to a TechSmith video means that the video is living in *someone's* TechSmith video library. Whoever the owner of that direct link is will be the one collecting all the viewing analytic data. If you want to be able to collect *your own viewing data for your own students*, you will need to make a copy of the TechSmith video so that it is in *your* TechSmith video library and you will then need to replace the direct link in your term course (NOT THE MASTER) with the direct link to the video that you copied that is sitting in your video library.

In order to make TechSmith videos searchable and available for other instructors to copy, you MUST make sure that your privacy setting on your TechSmith Video is set to "Anyone from your organization." By default, TechSmith sets videos at "Anyone from your organization with the link or in groups it's shared with" so it is VERY IMPORTANT to make sure to change this setting to the one listed below so that other instructors can search and copy the video to their own media library.

Don't know how to copy a video in TechSmith?
[Click here to get directions (https://blackboard.odessa.edu/bbcswebdav/xid-8466155_1).](https://blackboard.odessa.edu/bbcswebdav/xid-8466155_1)

QC2 Review

Want to make sure that the content you're using in your term courses and providing to your adjuncts is QC2 Compliant? **Jennifer Lee or Julie Lyon will be happy to do a detailed QC2 review of any Master course by request.** QC2 Reviews may take several days, depending on when the request is made and what else has been scheduled for the week.