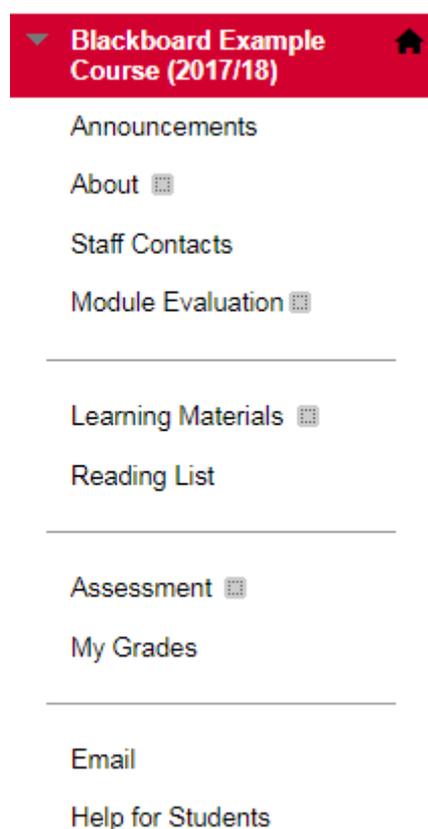University of
Reading

The default Blackboard course menu for new modules/programmes

A common student complaint, across the HE sector concerns the lack of consistency in the way information and resources are presented in the VLE (Blackboard) for different modules.

In response to this, and to help increase consistency and assist students in navigating courses on Blackboard, what follows is a suggested default menu structure for course areas in Blackboard. It aims to provide a minimum set of consistent headings and menu items. This leaves scope for module teams to customise their Blackboard courses to meet their needs, and lecturers and administrators can add items to the menu as required.

This default menu has been applied to new empty modules that were created in the rollover for 2017-18.

Default course menu

Suggested content for the new course menu

Menu item (title)	Description
Place general academic information about a programme or module in the top section.	
Announcements	**Tool Link**: Announcements Post time-sensitive news and information to students. Suggested post: A welcome announcement introducing the module/programme that describes what the online space is going to contain and be used for.
About	Content Area To contain the following information: • Link to module description located at: http://www.reading.ac.uk/modules/ • Module/programme handbook • Aims and learning outcomes • Technology requirements
Staff Contacts	**Tool Link:** Contacts Add an entry for each member of staff teaching on the module/programme to include: • Contact details: email and/or telephone • Office location • Office hours • Link to UoR staff profile (optional) • Photo (optional)

Module Evaluation	**Content Area**
	This area is for the Module Convenor's response to feedback obtained through the student module evaluation survey. It is pre-populated with three content items:
	• Information for Students
	• Module Convenor's Commentary on the module evaluation The commentary should be uploaded and attached to this content item at the appropriate time.
	• Information for Staff This item is visible only to those enrolled on the course with a staff role. It explains the purpose of the area, and how to use it.

Create menu items in the second section to store learning materials (using content areas) or provide links to online activities, e.g. Discussion board (using tool links), that are organised with a structure that complements the delivery of the learning, e.g. by topic, week, or activity.

Example menu items could include:

- Lecture notes
- Resources
- External links

You can also create menu items for centrally provided or general resources: e.g. past exam papers, glossary of terms, useful websites, etc.

Learning Materials	**Content Area**
	To contain course materials e.g. lecture notes, seminar materials, handouts, pre- or post-lecture activities
	Create folders within this area to aid navigation, and/or create additional content areas in this section of the menu.

Reading List	**Tool Link:** Reading List
	Required item to give students access to the relevant online reading list.
	It provides a link to the relevant **Talis Aspire reading list** for the module.
	This link needs to be configured by a course Instructor in order to work correctly for students – see http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/reading-lists/staff/blackboard
	If you have multiple course reading lists, delete this item and replace it with a new Content area – see 'Linking to multiple links' at http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/reading-lists/staff/blackboard

Place information about assessments in the third section, including links for students to submit electronically and/or take online tests. This could also include information about non-electronic assessment requirements.	
Assignments	Content Area To contain Turnitin and/or Blackboard Assignment submission points. (Go to Assessments > Assignment or Turnitin Assignment to set up an assignment.) Include information about the submission requirements and assessment criteria.
My Grades	Tool link: My Grades Include a link to the My Grades tool to give students access to marks and feedback recorded and released through the Grade Centre for assignments or tests.
Place general academic information about a programme or module in the final section.	
Email	Tool Link: Email Staff and students can contact each other via the Blackboard course.
Help for students	Web Link This links to the Student Help site https://blogs.reading.ac.uk/tel-help-for-students/

Further help

Please see the guide Customising a course menu, which can be found via the Support for Staff tab in Blackboard, for details on how to do this.

Further help can be found on the Blackboard Help site at:
https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Getting_Started/Navigate_Inside_a_Course