Using the Blackboard Fileshare
An introduction for administrators

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What is the Fileshare?

At Reading we use the term Fileshare for Blackboard’s built-in content management system, the Content Collection.

- Under **Institution > Subject** there are folders for each School / Department. These folders are suitable for storing content which needs to be shared across a School / Department / Programme.
- Programme Managers and Senior Programme Administrators have rights to manage the relevant folders in the **Institution > Subject** Fileshare area. This includes delegating editing rights to other staff in the School or Support Centre.
- Once you have editing rights, you can upload files (multiple files at once) directly to the Fileshare, and then link to them from
  - one or more courses
  - a Portal module
- You can organise files in folders, making it easier for you and other staff to locate particular files, and to manage permissions to those files.
- When you need to update a file, you can simply overwrite the old version in the Fileshare, and any links to that file will be automatically updated.

How do I access the Fileshare?

You can access Fileshare from the **Fileshare** tab.

You can also access the Fileshare from within a course,

In the course **Control Panel**, click on the arrow to the right of **Files** to open the course Fileshare area.

If you expand **Files** in the Control Panel menu you will see a variety of Fileshare areas to which you may have access. The course folder will always be listed at the top – showing the Blackboard course ID.
Once in the Fileshare, navigate to **Institution Content > Subjects**.

And then to the folder for your subject.

**Uploading content**

**Create a Folder**

Once you have editing rights to a Fileshare folder, you will see various editing options when you access that folder, including Create Folder.

Enter a *Folder Name* then press Submit.

When creating a folder avoid overlong folder names, and don't use special characters such as %
Uploading Files

Click on **Upload** then **Upload Files**.

You can now **Browse** to select the files you want to upload, or simply drag and drop them from your PC or network drive onto the dotted area in Blackboard.

Select the files you want to upload, and then press **Submit**.

You will see a green Success message, and will see that the files have been uploaded.
Uploading folders

Using the method above you are able to upload multiple files or entire folders, but all of the files will be uploaded into the same folder in the Blackboard Fileshare. And you cannot upload nested folders and subfolders.

To upload folders and sub-folders, and retain the folder structure, you can

- zip up your files – on your PC right-click on the files and choose Send to > Compressed (zipped) folder
- then in the Fileshare use **Upload Zip Package**.

This will upload the files and recreate the file / folder structure within the Blackboard Fileshare.

**Browse** for your zip file and press **Submit**.

You will see a green Success message when the zip file has been uploaded and the files unpackaged.
Managing Permissions

If you have Manage rights for a folder, you can manage the permissions on Fileshare items and folders. These are the permissions available:

- **Read**: users can view files or folders.
- **Write**: users can make changes to files and folders.
- **Remove**: users can delete files from the folder, or delete the folder itself.
- **Manage**: users can control the properties and settings (including permissions) of files and folders.

For more on permissions, see [https://en-us.help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Content/Content_Collection/Organize_and_Manage/Permissions](https://en-us.help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Content/Content_Collection/Organize_and_Manage/Permissions)

To assign permissions to other users

Click on the sharing icon shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File Type</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Edited</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Permissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>22-Mar-2017 15:44:01</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key Info</td>
<td>22-Mar-2017 15:43:47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programme Handbooks</td>
<td>22-Mar-2017 16:28:58</td>
<td>86.2 KB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will see details of any users (or groups of users) with permissions to view and/or edit this content.

Use the buttons above the list to add additional users.

1. **Select Specific Users**
   This allows you to add a user and specify what permissions you should have. You will need to enter the person’s Blackboard username (you can use the Browse option to find someone if you don’t know their username, but make absolutely sure that you select the
right user from the list). Contrary to what it says on screen, you cannot currently add more than one user at a time.

Choose the correct permissions to assign, and press **Submit**.

2. **Specific Users by Place**
   
   This allows you to assign permissions to
   
   a. everyone enrolled on a course or organisation
   
   b. or all instructors on a particular course
   
   c. or everyone in a specific Group on a course or organisation.

   To select a specific course or organisation
   
   * tick the required course or organisation from the list (these will be courses you are enrolled on)
   
   * or use Browse to locate other courses (you will be able to search for and any course in the School or Department where you have course admin rights)
• or enter the exact course ID in the box as shown.

Then select the relevant course role(s) – or choose ‘All Course Users’.
Select the required permissions, and press **Submit**.

The process is similar if you want to assign permissions to a specific course Group.

3. **Select Roles**
   This allows you to assign permissions e.g. to all students / all staff, all staff and students in your School, all students in a School.

   If you choose **All Roles** this will make the content visible to anyone with an active Blackboard account i.e. in practice, all staff and students in the University, plus external partners such as external examiners.

   To make content visible to staff and/or students in your School or Department, use **Institution Roles**.

   Institution roles are, for the most part, assigned automatically from RISIS and Trent. You will find that there is a role for each School (including both staff and students), as shown in the example below.

   In addition, there are more specific roles e.g. APD Staff, APD Student.

   For Malaysia, there are two top-level roles: UoRM Staff and UoRM Students, plus roles at a School level e.g. Psych Malaysia Students.
Please check with IT if you are not sure which users are included in a specific role.

### Add Institution User List: Key Info

| *Indicates a required field. |

**SELECT ROLES**

- **Institution Roles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items to Select</th>
<th>Selected Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAGES STAFF</td>
<td>SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE, POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL OF ARCH GEO &amp; ENV SCIENCE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL OF ARTS AND COMMUNICATION DESIGN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY, FOOD AND PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL OF CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **SET PERMISSIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permissions</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Write</th>
<th>Remove</th>
<th>Manage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Press **Submit** when you have made your selection, and chosen the appropriate permissions.

4. **Permit Anyone**

This will allow anyone – literally anyone in the world – to view the content.

This setting can be appropriate if, for example, you want to share a link with prospective students, or external partners who do not have a University of Reading IT account (e.g. work placement mentors).

Please note that, over time, files with 'Permit Anyone' permissions are likely to show up in public Google searches. Before setting public permissions, please consider if this is desirable / consistent with the University’s policies.

### Some notes about permissions

Some Schools have set their **Institution > Subject** folders so that they are potentially visible to All System Roles.

Folders inherit permissions from the level above. So, if all users can see your Subject folder, there is no need to add specific Read permissions to content in sub-folders – everyone with a current Blackboard account already has the right to view it.

You can remove existing permissions from the same Permissions screen.
Be careful when deleting permissions at the top level.

If, for example, all Economics students can view the ECO Subject folder, deleting that permission will mean that they can no longer see any of the sub-folders within the ECO folder. If you wanted them to see specific sub-folders, you would then have to add the permissions to those specific folders.

### Linking to files from a course

Once you have the files in the Fileshare you will need to make them visible to students. There are various options for doing this.

#### Link to individual files

Create an Item as normal, but under ATTACHMENTS, instead of clicking Browse My Computer, choose **Browse Content Collection**.

The Fileshare will open in a new window. By default you will see the Fileshare area for the course you are in.

Click on the **Browse** button to access other Fileshare areas, such as your Subject folder.
Browse to the area where your file is stored. When you have located it, tick the box next to the filename, then press **Submit**.

You can, if you wish, **select multiple files** to attach at once; even – as shown here – all of the files in the folder.
You will be returned to the Create Item screen where you can add descriptive text and apply any required settings. The attached files to students will display to students in exactly the same way as if you had uploaded files from your PC.
• If you link from a course to a file in the Institution Fileshare, read access to that file is automatically granted to anyone enrolled on the course.

• If the file is subsequently updated in the central location, students will see the updated version when they click on a link to it in a course.

**Link to a folder**

Instead of linking to individual files, you can just create a link to a folder. When a student clicks on the link they will see all of the files in the folder. This approach could be particularly useful if you are likely to be adding files to the folder over time – you won’t have to create a new link each time you upload a new file, as students will always be able to see an up-to-date list of files in the folder.

Create an Item as normal, and under ATTACHMENTS choose **Browse Content Collection**.

The Fileshare area for the course you are in will open in a new window. Browse to the required folder, place a tick the box next to the folder name, then press **Submit**.
Students will see the link to the folder in the same way that an attached file is shown.

When students click on the link, the folder will open in a new window.

If using this approach, it is important that you use meaningful filenames for your files, otherwise students won’t be able to tell which file they need.

**Linking to files from a Portal module**

If you need to link from a Portal module to one or more files, it is best practice to upload these files first to a suitable area of the Fileshare (rather than just uploading them directly to the module). Linking to files in the Fileshare makes it possible to

- update the file when needed (e.g. if you find a typo, or at the start of the next academic year)
- link to the same file from Blackboard courses and organisations as well
- delete the file when it is no longer needed.

Having uploaded your files to the Fileshare, you need to ensure that the permissions are set correctly, so that the students and staff who can see the Portal module also have the rights to view the linked file(s).

When you edit your portal module, click on the paperclip icon.
and then choose **Browse Content Collection** to locate and link to the desired file.

Instead of simply displaying the filename on screen, edit the **Name of Link to File** to control how the link will display to students.
Other Fileshare tasks

Moving a file

You can move a file to a new location in the Fileshare and links to the file from your course will still work.

From the contextual menu choose Move.

Click Browse.

Locate the folder to which you want to move the file, and tick the box next to the folder name.

Press Submit on this screen, then Submit again to move the file.
You can also move multiple files or folders at once. Tick the box next to the item, and then select Move at the bottom of the screen.

Copying a file

Follow the same procedure as when moving a file, but choose Copy from the contextual menu. You can copy the file to any other course or central Fileshare area to which you have editing rights.
Renaming a file

You can rename a file in the Fileshare and links to the file from your course will still work.

There’s not a rename option as such. From the contextual menu, choose Edit Settings.

then simply edit the File Name and press Submit.
Updating a file

If you need to update a file, you can make the changes offline (e.g. in Word) then simply upload the revised version and overwrite the old one.

From the contextual menu choose **Overwrite File**.

Browse to locate the new file, then press **Submit**.

Please note:

- the new file can have a different filename to the one it is replacing
- the original file name will still be displayed in the Fileshare (but of course you could now rename it manually, as shown above)
Deleting a file

Select Delete from the contextual menu.

You see a warning message before the file is deleted. As with any system, be quite sure that you do want to delete the items before you press OK.

As with moving and copying files, you can delete several items at once.

Remember that deleting a file in the Fileshare, does not delete the content item on the course it was linked to. Before deleting, check where the file is being used in Blackboard by clicking 360° View from the Contextual menu and look at Links.

Further help

Please see additional guides on course and portal administration located on the Support for Staff tab in Blackboard.

Further help can be found on the Blackboard Help site at: https://en-us.help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Course_Content/Content_Collection