



Blackboard 5 Roles

A Blackboard Tip Sheet

Introduction

In Blackboard 5, a **role** determines the user's level of access to a particular section of the Blackboard system or to a set of functionality within Blackboard. (Note: in this tip sheet, the term **user** refers to the Blackboard user account, not to the actual person.) This tip sheet will explain the differences between the various Blackboard roles.

There are three kinds of roles within Blackboard.

Primary Institution Roles. These roles govern a user's access to customizable functions of the My Institution portal. Each user can only have one Primary Institution role. The System Administrator sets primary Institution roles.

Administrative User Roles. These govern a user's access to the Blackboard System Administration menu. Each user can only have one Administrative User role. The System Administrator sets administrative User roles.

Course User Roles. These govern a user's access to the Control Panel of a course. Each user can only have one Course User role *per course*. Course User roles are set by the System Administrator or by the Instructor of the course.

Each of the kinds of roles is explained in detail below.

Primary Institution Roles

There are seven Primary Institution roles:

- Student
- Faculty
- Staff
- Alumni
- Prospective Student
- Guest
- Other

Primary Institution roles are used as groups to allow for the customization of access to My Institution portal modules in Blackboard 5 Level 2 and Blackboard 5 Level 3.

For example, a Blackboard System Administrator could set the My Courses module so it is enabled and required for any user with the Primary Institution role of Student, but have it enabled and *not* required for users with the Staff Primary Institution role. Staff would then have the option of including or not including the My Courses module on their My Institution page.

Since the My Institution portal is not customizable in Blackboard 5 Level 1, ***the Primary Institution role has no active functionality in Blackboard 5 Level 1.*** However, the Primary Institution role is included in Blackboard 5 Level 1 in the event that the Level 1 institution upgrades to Level 2 or Level 3 at a later date. Blackboard recommends that Level 1 clients still set the Primary Institution role as new users are created since this will eliminate the need to retro-actively set a Primary Institution role for all existing users if an institution upgrades to Level 2 or Level 3.

Administrative User Roles

Administrative User roles determine a user's level of access to the system and, more specifically, to the System Admin tab. These roles are applied system-wide.

There are six Administrative User roles:

- None
- Guest
- System Admin
- System Support
- Course Creator
- User Administrator

Each user can have only one Administrative User role.

A description of each of the roles follows:

None

A user that is set to 'None' has no access to the System Admin tab at all and will not even see the System Admin tab. Typically, this is the Administrative User role that all of the institutions' students and faculty should be set to. It allows access to the common tabs (e.g. any except System Admin) and any course in which they are enrolled. The Course User role assigned to that user for that particular course will determine the level of access within a specific course.

Guest

Guest-level privilege allows for the viewing of any *unsecured* area of a course Web site on a Blackboard server. It does not provide any access to the System Admin tab at all.

Every Blackboard system has a default Guest user account called "Blackboard 5 Guest" with the UserID of "guest." (This account should never be removed or modified.) While it is not possible to log in as this user, the "guest" user is keyed to the Preview button. This user always has the Administrative User role of Guest.

Guest access and the Preview button are controlled at three levels:

Guest Access System Override: If the System Administrator can set the Guest Access System Override to "allow," then a Preview button is enabled on the main Login page. By clicking on the Preview button *anyone* can log in to the system as the special Guest user. If the Guest Access System Override is set to "do not allow," then a valid user account will be required to access the system.

The Administrative User role of Guest exists so the System Administrator can disallow the general Guest Access (in other words, turn off the Preview button on the main Login page), but still provide guest access to *individuals*. For example, perhaps an institution would like *not* to give Guest access to the entire world, but still provide Guest access to certain individuals like trustees or reviewers from an accrediting body. Those individuals could be given accounts with the Administrative User role set to Guest.

Guest Access Course Option: The System Administrator can set the Guest Access Course Option on a course-by-course basis through the Course Management controls. Depending on how the System Administrator has configured Blackboard, each Instructor of each course may also be able to control the Guest Access Course Option through the Course Options tool in the Control Panel. If the Guest Access Course Option is set to "Yes," then a Preview button will appear next to the course listing in the Course Catalog. By clicking on the Preview button anyone can access the course as the special Guest user. Otherwise, only enrolled users can access the course.

Course Area Security: If the Guest Access Course Option has been enabled then the System Administrator and/or the Instructor of a course can determine which areas are "secured." by using the Area Availability controls under Course Options in the course's Control Panel. A secured area is accessible only to enrolled users and *not* accessible to the special Guest account *or* a user with the Administrative User role of Guest.

System Admin

A user with the System Admin role has access to the whole System Admin tab and to the Control Panel of every course on the system. The System Administrator is the most powerful level of access that can be assigned to a user.

Every Blackboard system must have at least one System Administrator. It is fairly common to have two or three System Administrators, but since this is the most powerful role on the system, you should not give this level of access to many people. The following Administrative User roles can be used to distribute administrative responsibilities.

System Support

A user set to the System Support role has access to the whole System Admin tab, but **not** to the Control Panel of every course on the system.

You might assign the System Support role to technical assistants who need to perform administrative tasks, but who should not have the ability to change the faculty's content in their courses.

Course Creator

A user with the Course Creator role has access to the System Admin tab, but only the Course Management section of the System Admin tab. While the Course Creator role does provide access to the Course Management section, a user with this role will not have access to the Control Panel of individual courses.

IMPORTANT: many institutions make the mistake of thinking the user needs to have the Course Creator admin role to be the Instructor of a Blackboard course site. This is incorrect. These are administrative roles -- there is typically no reason faculty users need to be assigned an administrative role. The Instructors of Blackboard course sites are determined on a course-by-course basis by the Course User roles, *not* by an Administrative User role. So the Instructor Course User role is course-specific, *not* system-wide.

The Course Creator role is design specifically for someone who will assist the System Administrator with course management tasks -- creating courses, copying or recycling courses, exporting courses, etc.

Account Administrator

A user with the Account Administrator role has access to the System Admin tab, but only the User Management section of the System Admin tab.

The Account Administrator role allows the System Administrator to have someone who will help specifically with user management tasks, such as creating user, enrolling them in courses, changing passwords, etc.

Course User Roles

Course User roles determine the level of access to a course.

There are five Course User roles:

- Instructor
- Teaching Assistant
- Course Builder
- Grader
- Student

Each user can have only one Course User role *per course*. These roles are *course-specific*, so a single user could be assigned the Instructor role in one course, but be assigned the Student role in another course.

Blackboard 5 Level 2 and Level 3 have a Communities tab where organization Web sites can be created. Organization Web sites have the same functionality as course Web sites, and the Course User roles' functionality works identically in organization Web sites.

Instructor

The Instructor role has the highest level of privilege within a course. Typically, the Instructor is the person teaching or leading the class. The Instructor has access to everything in the course's Control Panel.

Teaching Assistant

The Teaching Assistant is the rough equivalent of the Instructor. This role would be assigned to a user who will be significantly participating in the teaching of the class or management of the course site.

The Teaching Assistant has access to everything in the course's Control Panel except for certain User Management capabilities (such as the ability to remove an Instructor from the course, for example).

Course Builder

The Course Builder role has access to the course's Control Panel, but only to the Content Areas section and the User Management section. An Instructor would assign someone the Course Builder role so that person could assist the Instructor in the creation of course content and some of the course management. As with the Teaching Assistant role, access within the User Management section is limited to prevent the Course Builder from removing Instructors, modifying user properties, etc.

Grader

The Grader role has access to the course's Control Panel, but only to the Assessment section. A Grader would assist the Instructor in the creation,

management, delivery, and grading of online assessments delivered through Blackboard.

Student

The Student role is the default course role. A user with the Course User role of Student has no access to the course's Control Panel.

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