

WHY WOULD YOU USE THIS FEATURE?

Instructors can assign students in particular groups for specific group work. This is a private area within Blackboard where only the assigned students and the instructor are allowed to view the information. Students can exchange files, use the discussion board, email and use the virtual classroom. At any time, the instructor can change or modify the groups.

TO ADD GROUPS TO A BLACKBOARD CLASS:

1. In control panel, click Manage Groups in user management section.
2. Click on +Add Group. Complete the Add Group page, choosing the group options and the group availability you want for the students.
3. Click submit. Click OK.
4. If you click on modify on the Manage Groups page, the instructor can change the group properties, add users, list users, and remove users. You can find more information about adding, listing and removing users below.
5. If you are using the discussion board with groups, the first forum **is** automatically created using the name of the group. Students can then add threads to the first forum. Instructors will have to add more forums, if necessary.

TO ADD, LIST OR REMOVE USERS:

1. Once you have clicked on modify (see #4 above), choose how you wish to manage the group. When you add, list or remove users you can choose the "list all" tab and click search. The system should warn you that this method could take a while especially if you have a large roll.
2. Once you have the list of students, you can add students to a group by clicking in the add box on the far left side of the page. This will allow you to form specific groups within your class roll.
3. If you choose to remove a student from the list of users, you must type the word "Yes" before clicking submit.

HOW DO STUDENTS USE IT?

1. Click on Communication (button). Remember the instructor will have to make communication area available. Directions are below.
2. Click on Group Pages.
3. Click on the assigned group. If the group is unavailable to a student, they will not be able to click on or open it.
4. Through their group pages, students may have the option to check the group discussion board, collaborate with chat or virtual classroom, open any files that the other group members have shared, and send an email to group members using their UTC email address.

TO MAKE THE GROUPS & COMMUNICATION FEATURES SAVAILABLE:

1. In the control panel, click on Manage Course Menu in the course options section.
2. Click modify next to communication. In #1 check the box that says Available for Student/Participant users. In #2 check available for group pages. Click submit.
3. Notice that the red words "This item is currently unavailable" are no longer under communication. Click OK.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS FOR STUDENTS

Since the group feature is usually within the communication area, students may need to be told where this feature is located if the instructor changes the location.

Students may be told to visit their group pages on a certain date, however the students cannot access their assigned group. There are a few reasons why this may happen. It may be because the instructor has not made the communication area available. Also, it could be because the instructor has assigned the student to the wrong group or the student does not know their group.