Blackboard Courses: Understanding Course Requests, Course Ownership, and Provisioning

Preliminary Steps/Issues

1. Must have an active UHCL Computer Account
2. Must complete/have completed Blackboard Training (at UHCL)
3. Understanding Master Courses and Semester Offerings
   a. Master Courses - are only used to develop and/or revise course contents; students are NEVER granted access to a Master Course; once a master course is ready for instructional use, the instructor must provision a semester offering based on the contents of the Master Course
   b. Semester Offerings - these are Blackboard courses that are used in a specific semester; they may be created (“provisioned”) either from the instructor’s Master Course, another instructor’s existing Master Course, or a previous Semester Offering belonging to the instructor; enrolled students are automatically granted access to the Semester Offering
4. For fully online courses there are specific deadlines for each semester, both for requesting new Master Courses and for submitting Master Courses for Quality Assurance (QA) review, that are published by the university and that must be met in order to assure that courses are ready and available for instruction by the weekend before classes begin. For current and upcoming deadlines, visit the Online Course Development Calendar website.

Course Requests Submission

Complete course requests in OPALS. Components of the request include:

1. Delivery Mode
   a. F2F/F2F w Web
   b. Partially Online
   c. Fully Online
2. Delivery Semester
3. Development Semester (Fully Online Courses Only)
4. Content Source
   a. Blank (used to build a new course “from scratch”)
   b. Existing Contents (Other Instructor*)
      i. Delegation – When you request permission to borrow contents from another instructor’s existing course, the course owner has two choices as to the level of permission (or delegation) he/she grants the borrower:
         1. Limited Delegation – This grants the requestor a temporary copy of the owner’s master course from which the requestor may teach for one semester only. Semester offerings that result from limited delegation MAY NOT be used to create subsequent Semester Offerings, as they requestor doesn’t “own” the course contents. NOTE: When limited delegation is granted, no master is generated for the requestor. Instead, the owner’s master course will appear in the list of available content sources on the provisioning screen for the requestor.
         2. Full Delegation – This grants the requestor a permanent copy of the owner’s master course, which the requestor may alter as they see fit and which they may use indefinitely from which to teach.
   c. Development Responsibility (fully online courses)
      i. Do-it-Yourself – The requestor assumes full responsibility for ensuring that their new master course is fully developed and meets all Quality Assurance (QA) criteria
ii. ID Assistance – The requestor agrees to work with the designated Instructional Designer (ID) for their college. The ID works as a consultant with the instructor to ensure that the new master course is fully developed and meets all Quality Assurance (QA) criteria on or before the published QA deadline. **NOTE: Requests for fully online courses in the College of Business (COB) must include the use of ID assistance, as per the Dean’s directive.**

**Course Request Approval Chain**

1. Source Content Owner – NOTE: If the owner of the source contents is no longer employed by UHCL or is unwilling to share their contents, the Program/Department Chair, Associate Dean, and/or Dean will need to intervene and either approve the request for borrowed contents or make other arrangements to assist the requestor.
2. Program Chair (COB, CSE Only)
3. Division Chair (CSE Only)
4. Dean (or designated representative)
5. Office of Distance and Off-Campus Education
6. Course Development and Support Team

**Master Course Creation**

1. Creation process varies slightly, according to delivery mode and content source:
   a. F2F/Web-Supported or Partially Online (Blank/Existing Contents, except Limited Delegation) – Fastest. Blank master shell or source course is copied, creating a new master for the requestor.
   b. Fully Online (Blank/Existing Contents, except Limited Delegation) – Slowest. Blank master shell or source course is created as a temporary new Master Course. The requestor, either alone or with assistance from a member of the Instructional Design team, must fully develop the online course before proceeding to the Quality Assurance (QA) review.
      i. Quality Assurance (QA) – Fully Online ONLY.
         1. Requestor notifies the Course Development and Support Team that the master is ready for QA review.
         2. Quality Assurance Evaluator accesses the master course and reviews it against the published university QA Checklist.
         3. Reviewer submits report, including recommended modifications, to requestor.
         4. Modifications are made by requestor and/or requestor negotiates with the Quality Assurance Evaluator regarding their recommendations.
         5. Repeat Steps 1-4, as needed.
         6. QA Evaluator annotates (in OPALS) that the new course has passed QA review.
         7. A new copy of the QA-approved course is created and identified in the OPALS system as an online-approved master, marking it as eligible from which to provision semester offerings.

**Provisioning**

Provisioning is the act of making an exact copy of an existing master course or previous semester offering to be used from which to teach (or to support teaching) is a specific semester.

1. In the OPALS application, use the “Provision a Course” link.
2. Specify the delivery semester.
3. Select the source of the new Semester Offering’s contents:
   a. Requestor’s Master Course
   b. Another instructor’s Master Course (in cases in which the course request included asking for permission to borrow existing content and the owner granted only “Limited Delegation”)
   c. Requestor’s previous Semester Offering
4. Select the section(s) of students who should share the new Semester Offering.
5. Submit.
6. The new Semester Offering should be available to the requestor within 48 hours.

* Veteran instructors who have existing Blackboard master courses can also request new masters, based on a copy of their own, existing master course contents.