

Hi

I am sending this PDF with screen examples because of what happened in the Fall term. Some students assumed that if they used Blackboard before, that the technical requirements to use it were the same or that new equipment the students had would work with Blackboard. For example, some students using unsupported browsers could not see links and quizzes. This link is meant to try to prevent that problem.

I am also providing this link because this is a “pathway” course and it is set up to help you if you follow the “path.” A “pathway” course is one of two broad types of distance learning courses that the Distance Learning Department encourages faculty to use. It is called a “pathway” course because it tries to provide a safe “path” for taking a distance learning course.

Since this course may or may not be different from what you have used before, I’m providing these tips. This is **not** a substitute for your doing WCJC’s required Course Orientation and my additional orientation to InQuizitive and to requirements for evidence, but a way:

- To avoid technical problems that students have been having
- To get you to that Orientation successfully and to help you avoid getting off the “path”

Making Sure Your Device and Browser Will Work with Blackboard and Logging into Blackboard

1. Use the “Computer Requirements” link before you login.
2. Log into Blackboard. You’ll need your Banner ID (@##### twice).
3. Do change your password.

Tip: If your browser is not listed in the lower right hand corner, then you need to try another one.

The image is a screenshot of a web browser displaying the Blackboard login page for Wharton County Junior College. The browser's address bar shows the URL <https://wcjc.blackboard.com/>. The page features a red header with the college's logo and name. Below the header, there are three main columns: 'Blackboard Login', 'Student Help Desk', and 'Additional Information'. The 'Blackboard Login' section includes a login form with fields for 'Username:' and 'Password:', a 'Login' button, and a 'Forgot Your Password' link. The 'Student Help Desk' section provides contact information for IT support, including a phone number and hours, and lists resources like 'Computer Requirements', 'Frequently Asked Questions', and 'Blackboard How-To Videos'. The 'Additional Information' section contains links to 'Distance Education Department', 'WCJC B&N Bookstore', and 'DE Student Handbook', along with a 'For Faculty' section and 'Downloadable Resources' like 'Download Firefox', 'Download Chrome', and 'LockDown Browser User Guide'. Several red and blue callout boxes with arrows point to specific elements on the page, providing additional tips and instructions. A red box at the top left points to the address bar, advising to save the URL. A blue box at the top right offers a tip about the difficulty of an 8-week course. A red box on the left points to the login instructions. A blue box at the bottom left provides a tip about logging out on public computers. A red box at the bottom center points to the 'Computer Requirements' link, advising to check it before logging in. A red box on the right points to the 'Downloadable Resources' section, advising to use these links for browser downloads, with Firefox being the safest option.

Save this URL in case the WCJC site is down (rare) and Blackboard is still up.

Tip: An 8-week course is hard. Be sure you match online learning. If you have never taken an online class, consider this useful self-test.

Read this and this.

Tip: If you are on a public computer, logout when you are done. Blackboard stays open.

Use the "Computer Requirements" link before you login. Having a new device or that your device worked last term won't protect you. Your device and your current browser must match Blackboard. Students are not seeing links, not see all quiz questions, and so on. Check first!

If you need to download a browser, use these links. In general, Firefox seems safest.

Announcements:

How to Enter Your Blackboard Course and Stay on the “Path”

Once in Blackboard, enter your course by clicking on it under the Course List—and **no** other way. For example, based on student comments, students who enter through some of the shortcut methods do not even see the instructions for exams or assignments.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard interface for Wharton County Junior College. The top navigation bar includes 'My Institution', 'Courses', 'Community', and 'Services'. The main content area is divided into sections: 'Tools' (with links like Announcements, Calendar, Tasks, My Grades, Send Email, Personal Information, Goals, Browse NBC Learn, NBC Learn Playlist, Course Materials, and Course Materials Hub), 'My Announcements' (showing no announcements in the last 7 days), and 'Course List'. A blue arrow points to the 'Course List' section. A yellow callout box points to the 'Send Email' link in the Tools menu, containing the text: 'Caution: Do not use this email. Instead, email using Blackboard Messages. Messages is available on the left menu within the Blackboard Course.' A blue callout box points to the 'Course List' section, containing the text: 'For success in this “pathway” course, do this: 1. Look for your History course in the Course List. 2. Click on it. If you log in when the course first opens, the course will open with a Read Me First page that tells you what to do. If you come in later, click on Read Me First on the left menu.'

How to Go Directly to Getting Started

If you enter the course **when it opens** (and you should), Blackboard automatically displays the required items for Getting Started—including the required “introductory tasks” you must do before the date in the Course Schedule. It also covers additional steps you must do immediately within the course.

Tip: If you enter the course **late** and Blackboard displays the Home Page, click on “Read Me First” on the left menu to display this screen.

The screenshot shows the 'Read Me First' page in Blackboard. The page title is 'Read Me First' and it says 'If this item does not open automatically you can open Read Me First here'. The page content includes a 'Table of Contents' with items like 'I. Read Me First', 'II. Syllabus & Schedule', 'III. Course Orientation', 'IV. Academic Honesty Statement for Online Learning', 'V. Change of Needs', 'VI. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)', 'VII. Registration of Incoming Students', 'VIII. Good Habits for Evidence-Based Learning', 'IX. The links below are shortcuts to Course Tools', 'X. Discussion Board', and 'XI. Messages'. A red callout box points to the 'Table of Contents' and says: 'You can click to display the Syllabus & Schedule from 2 places. Its last page is the Course Schedule—a key to doing your work on time. Print the Course Schedule and check it off as you do finish.' A blue callout box points to the 'Read Me First' title and says: 'The words and organization used in Getting Started are from the WCJC Distance Learning Department. They have given their permission for faculty to use them. (In other words, it is not plagiarism.)' A red callout box points to the 'Read Me First' item in the Table of Contents and says: 'Read Me First automatically opens on the right. It is a pdf so you can save it to your computer and leave it open until you complete each required task.' A green callout box points to the 'Read Me First' item in the Table of Contents and says: 'Read Me First covers what you do with each one.' A blue callout box points to the 'Discussion Board' and 'Messages' items in the Table of Contents and says: 'These are the two Blackboard tools you need during Getting Started.' A red callout box points to the left navigation menu and says: 'The left menu is explained in Course Orientation.'