# Blackboard Blogs Tool

A Blog—shorthand term that means Web log—is a personal online journal that is frequently updated and intended for general public distribution. **Blogs created inside Bb courses, however, are only accessible to course participants.** Each Blog entry can include any combination of text, images, links, multimedia, Mashups, and attachments. An Instructor can choose to allow students to participate in Blogs in three ways:

- **Course Blogs:** All Course members can add Blog entries and add comments.
- **Individual Blogs:** Only individual Course members are able to add Blog entries. All other Course members can view and add comments.
- **Group Blogs:** If the Blogs tool for Groups is enabled, all Group members can add Blog entries and make comments on Blog entries. Any Course member can view Group Blogs, but can only add comments.
- **Important:** Once you have created a blog, you cannot go back and change the blog type. Instead, you will need to delete the blog and create a new one.

How to Create a Blog Topic

1. Access the Course. Ensure Edit Mode is ON.

2. In the Control Panel, expand the Course Tools section. Select Blogs.
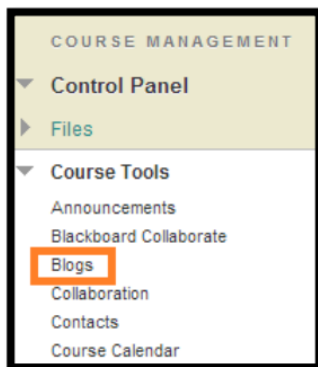
3. On the Blogs listing page, click Create Blog on the Action Bar.
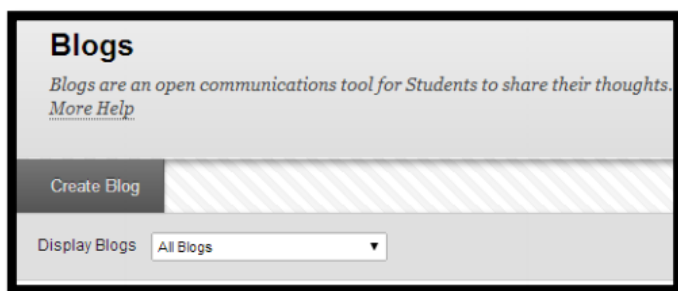
4. On the Create Blog page, type a Name for the Blog.

5. Type optional Instructions for the Blog. Format the text and add images, links, multimedia, Mashups, and attachments using the functions in the Text Editor, if needed. Attachments added using the Text Editor can have alternate text added to describe the attachment.

6. Under Blog Availability, select the Yes option to make it available to users.

7. Use the Display After and or Display Until date and time fields to limit the availability of the Blog. Select the Display After and Display Until check boxes in order to enable the date and time selections.

8. Under Blog Participation, select Individual to All Students or Course. Select Allow Anonymous Comments for Individual Blogs or Allow Anonymous Entries and Comments for Course and Group Blogs, if needed.

9. Under Blog Settings, select Monthly or Weekly Index Entries.

10. Optionally, select the check box to Allow Users to Edit and Delete Entries.

11 .Optionally, select the check box to Allow Users to Delete Comments.

12. Select No grading or the Grade option and type the number of Points possible. Points possible will apply to one or more entries made by the user to the Blog topic. Once a Blog is set to be graded, a column is created for it in the Grade Center. It is permanently gradable and cannot be set to No grading.
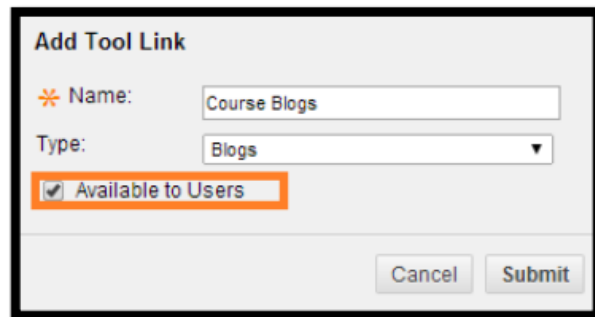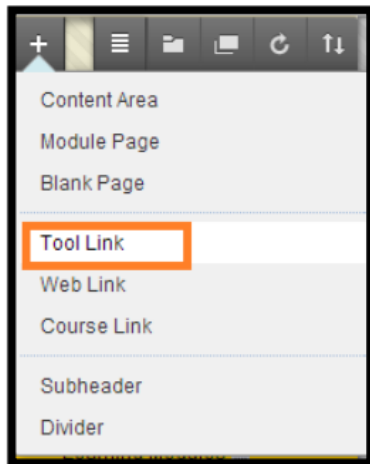
13. Click Submit.

Adding a Course Menu Button for a Blog

To make the Blogs you have created easily accessible to your students you can add a Course Menu button or link to the Blogs Listing page named "Course Blogs" or something similar.

1. Select the plus sign at the top of your course menu and select Create Tool Link.

2. Give Button a Name.

3. Under Type, select Blogs.

4. Select "Available to Users." Click Submit. This will link to the Blogs Listing page.

It is also possible to add a link to a specific Blog from within a course Content Area (e.g. "Course Documents" or "Course Information") by using the Add Interactive Tool.

How to Create a Blog Entry

1. On the Blogs listing page, select a Blog title.

2. On the Blog's topic page, click Create Blog Entry on the Action Bar.
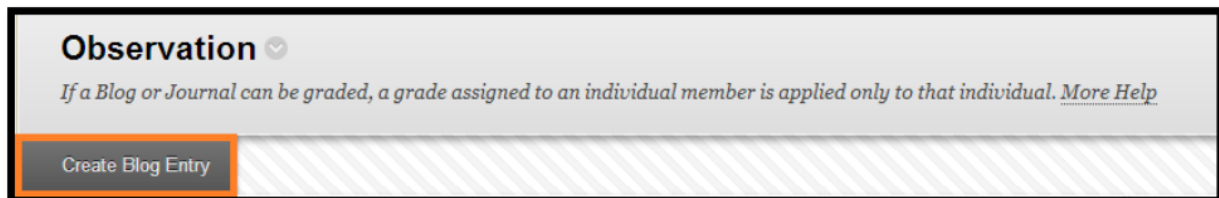
3. On the Create Blog Entry page, type a Title for the Blog entry.

4. Type text in the Entry Message text box. Format the text and add images, links, multimedia, Mashups, and attachments using the functions in the Text Editor, if needed.

5. Attachments added using the Text Editor can have alternate text added to describe the attachment.

6. If enabled, select the check box for Post Entry as Anonymous, if appropriate.

7. Alternatively, under Blog Entry Files, browse for a file to attach to the Blog entry.

8. Click Post Entry to submit the Blog entry or click Save Entry as Draft to add the entry later.

NOTE: To view or add to saved drafts, click View Drafts on the Action Bar on the Blogs listing page.

On the Blogs listing page, topics appear in alphabetical order. Under each Blog title, students can see if the Blog belongs to a group, the course, or to individual students.

How to Comment on a Blog Entry

Because Blogs are meant to be read by others, students can comment on one another's Blog entries, whether they belong to an individual, the Course, or a Group. The Instructor determines if comments can be made anonymously or deleted. The Instructor can delete any user's comment by clicking the X. Comments cannot be edited after they are posted.

1. On the Blogs listing page, select a Blog title.

2. On the Blog's topic page, select a blog to view by selecting the user's name in the side panel. The user's blog entries open in the content frame.

3. Click Comment following the user's entry. The Comment text box appears.

4. Type a comment in the Comment text box.

5. Click Spell Check at the bottom of the Comment text box to check the spelling of the content before continuing.

6. If enabled, select the check box for Comment on Entry as Anonymous, if appropriate.

7. Click Add. Click the Comments link below the entry to view the comment.

Editing and Managing Blogs

Instructors can edit basic properties of a Blog topic, including the name, instructions, availability, and some settings. Once a Blog topic is designated for individuals or the Course, it cannot be changed to the other. Instructors can edit any user's Blog entries and can delete Blog topics. Comments can be deleted by the Instructor, but no user is allowed to edit Comments.

How to Edit a Blog

1. Ensure Edit Mode is ON.

2. On the Blogs listing page, click a Blog's Action Link to access the contextual menu.

3. Select Edit.
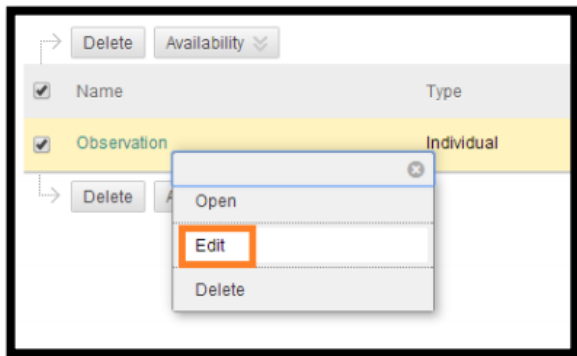
4. On the Edit Blog page, make changes.

5. Click Submit.

How to Delete a Blog

1. Ensure Edit Mode is ON.

2. On the Blogs listing page, click a Blog's

Action Link to access the contextual menu.

3. Select Delete.

4. Click OK in the confirmation window. All entries and comments are deleted.
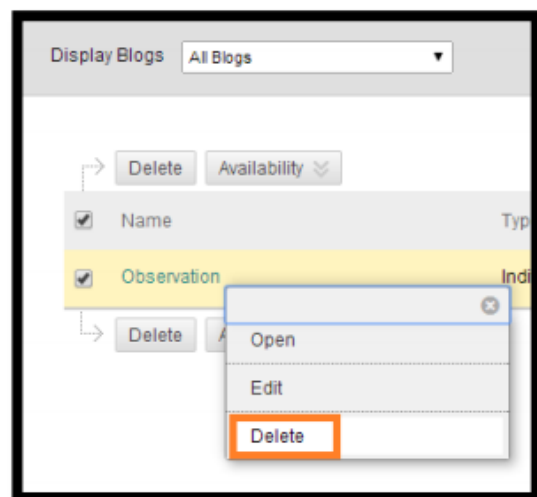
Note: When a graded Blog is selected for deletion, a Delete Confirmation page appears. Select the appropriate check box or boxes to delete the Blog or the Blog and the Grade Center column.
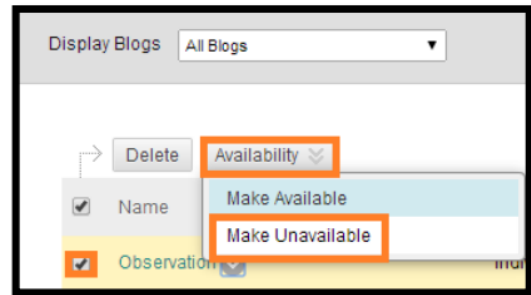
How to Change the Availability of a Blog

1. Ensure Edit Mode is ON.

2. On the Blogs listing page, select the check box next to the appropriate Blog.

3. Point to Availability on the Action Bar to access the drop-down list.

4. Select Make Available or Make Unavailable.

Grading Blogs

If you have chosen to grade the blog, a column will be added to the Grade Center automatically. Instructors can assign an overall grade for the student's blog contributions.

To grade a student's blog posts, you can either enter the grades through the Grade Center or directly from the blog. To grade from the blog, do the following:

1. Enter the blog that you wish to grade.

2. On the Blog's topic page, select a blog to view by selecting the user's name in the side panel.

3. Enter a grade in the Grade window, any feedback to the student, private grading notes for yourself, and click Submit. This will be a grade for the overall blog, not for individual posts.
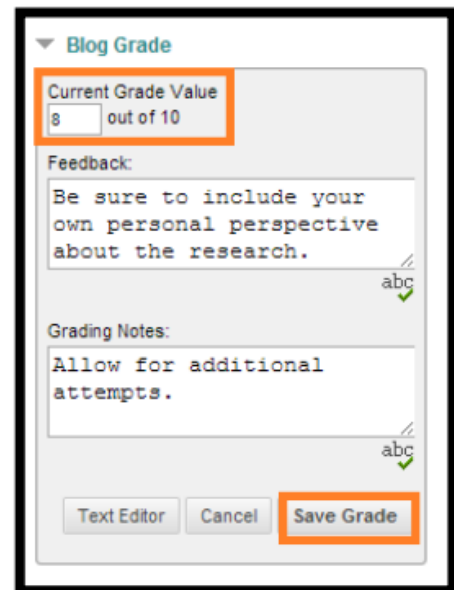
You can go back and edit the grade at any time. The grade will be saved in the Grade Center automatically.

Once Blog entries have been graded, students can view the grade in two places. The grading information appears on the Blog topic page and in the My Grades tool.