



Mandatory standards for course developers

Course size

If you are setting up a course within Blackboard, your entire course should not exceed 50 Mb.

The maximum file size of any individual file that can be uploaded to Blackboard is 2 Mb.

The 50 Mb limit includes everything in your course — the pages stored within Blackboard, all images uploaded to Blackboard, discussion forums and their associated threads.

Course size can be minimised by optimising:

- Images
- Audio
- Video

Resources from the Resource Exchange must be linked to and not copied into a Blackboard Course to further minimise course sizes.

See the following sections for further information

Images

It is recommended that images files be no larger than 50Kb.

- Choosing the best file type for each graphic can greatly reduce the file size.
- GIF format is best for line drawings and solid colour images.
- JPEG format is best for photographs and gradient colours.

Image file sizes can be further reduced by cropping and resizing.

For additional information see [Optimising images – compress, crop and resize](#).

Video

Video should be no longer than 90 seconds. The size of the video frame should be appropriate for the content but keeping it as small as possible. The associated audio should be mono unless stereo adds to the content. Video must be optimised for online delivery.

For additional information see [Optimising video using Windows Movie Maker](#).

Audio files

- Audio files must be saved in .mp3 format.
- Voice recordings should not exceed 56 bits/sec
- Music should not exceed 128 bits/sec
- Do not use stereo unless it is essential this will halve the file size

For additional information see [Optimising audio using Audacity](#).



Embedding a Curriculum Exchange resource into a Blackboard course

To reduce Blackboard course size Resource Exchange items should be linked to (embedded) and not copied into Blackboard pages.

[View the online tutorial.](#)

Formatting text

- Use Verdana for body text – it was developed for web pages and is generally available on other computers.
- Specify fonts in pixels rather than in points – body text of 10 point (equivalent to 12 pixels) is more likely to display in a viewable size on all screens.
- Limit fonts used for headings to those installed with the computer's operating system. Fonts installed by other pieces of software, even those from the Microsoft® Office collection, may not be on other computers.
- Selecting fonts for improving readability. Highly decorative fonts are difficult to read and people spend time deciphering the text rather than understanding and interacting with the content – even when the font is used in the heading.
- Reserve underlining for hyperlinks – people expect to click on underlined words and it is disconcerting if nothing happens.
- Use bold to emphasise significant pieces of text.
- Limit the use of italics – while italics print well, they are jagged on the screen and are often difficult to read.
- Avoid using distracters like blinking text or animations that never stop. The eye is continually drawn to the movement and it can be distracting.

Web safe colours

Some general guidelines for use of colour on the web are:

- Select colours from the web-safe palette.
- Use colours with a strong contrast so that different elements are easy to see.
- Use black text on a white background when large quantities of text are being presented. This is the easiest colour combination to read.
- View your pages on different computer monitors because the colours may be displayed differently.

For help see [The browser-safe web palette.](#)