**Introduction**

Every Module and Programme in the Student Information Database (SID) has a Blackboard Course automatically created for it, and the current template automatically applied.

All the students registered for the Programme or Module will be automatically given access to the Blackboard area. Students can then access the area once the academic in charge of the Course area has manually released it to students.

These automatically generated Blackboard sections do not necessarily match the taught curriculum. Some programme teams use a programme area, some don’t. Some departments provide students with a separate module area for each module, and some join several modules together in one Blackboard Course area. This guide will help you ensure that the way the Course areas are set up in Blackboard fits with the way the curriculum is taught.
The examples used in this guide may not be the same as modules and programmes that you will be working with. However, the technical process involved will be the same, whether you are merging a Child Course into a Parent Course, creating a new area with the ‘_MRG’ suffix to merge a number of courses into, or giving staff access to the section.

In Part 1 of this document we look at how courses can be merged. We start in Part 1a by looking at merging some Child Courses into a Master Course. In Part 1b we’ll look at creating a new Course area for a number of Child Courses to be merged into.

Before we start, be aware that course merging is performed using the Administrator Panel in Blackboard. Click on the System Admin tab to access this panel.

To search for courses to merge you need to access the ‘Courses’ page. Click on the ‘Courses’ link to open it.
Part 1a: Merging one area into another

We will use a module with the code LIT1000 in this example. You can search for this in the ‘Search’ section, using ‘Course ID’ ‘Contains’ ‘LIT1000’.

In the returned results, we see a range of modules from different years.
Let’s say that we are interested in the 2016-17 years modules. We can see that there are three prefixed with 2016:

- ‘2016_LIT1000’ which is the main area that most student have access to.
- ‘2016_LIT1000S’ which is a version of the module taught off campus in Skelmersdale.
- ‘2016_LIT1000U’ which is a version that Study Abroad students are given access to.

The Skelmersdale students are taught separately from the main group of student taught at Ormskirk, so the section with the prefix S does not need merging into the main area. However the Study Abroad student will be part of the group taught at Ormskirk, and they will need access to the same Blackboard course as those students. We therefore need to merge the Study Abroad student area (the Child area), in with the main area (the Master area).

Hover over the Course ID for the main area which is going to be the Master course and a grey circle will appear.

Click on the grey arrow to open a menu. Select the Edit option and the ‘Course Settings’ page opens. Within the section ‘General Information’ you will see a check box labelled ‘Select Courses to Merge’.
If you click on the box a Child Courses section appears below it. This allows you to select ‘Child’ courses to merge into the ‘Master’ course (i.e. ‘2016_LIT1000’).

Click on the ‘Browse’ button and a window will open containing search options. You can use this to search for a child course to add. In this case we want to add ‘2016_LIT1000U’, so we’ll search for that.

Click on the check box on the left to select the Course area, then click the ‘Submit’ button. The Course ID for the Child Course will be added to the text box.

You can then click on the ‘Submit’ button to save your changes.
If you search for either the Child or Master Courses now you will see an arrow next to the Child Course, and its Course ID indented. This visual indication of the relationship between the two Course areas will make it easier to track.
Part 1b: Creating a new ‘Parent’ area to merge modules into

We have seen how to merge one area into another. However, there are cases where separate modules or instances of courses are taught together. For example, two programmes might share the teaching on a Research Methods module, but register the students separately on their own modules.

In this case you would create a new area that will be used as a ‘Parent’ course, and merge in both of the modules.

Click on ‘Create Course’ and select ‘New’ from the menu.

Add information to the ‘Create Course’ page.

- **Course Name**: Should be the title of the course which students will see. If the module names are the same you can use the same title. If they are different you might want to decide on a title which both groups of students will understand. For consistency, we’d recommend writing this in capitals.

- **Course ID**: Should be in the format YEAR_[[distinguishing information such as programme or module code] ]_MRG. For example, 2017_FOHSC_BSCN_MAR17_MRG, where 2017 represents the 2017-18 academic year and MRG shows that it is a merged course.
- **Term:** Select the academic year that this area relates to, to allow staff to organise their list of courses by academic year.

- **Availability:** Leave the ‘Available’ setting set to ‘No’ to prevent students being able to view the section. The module/programme leader will release the section when it is time.

When you have added the information click the ‘Submit’ button.

The new area will need the Course or Module template applying. These can be downloaded from: [http://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/11062/](http://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/11062/)

They can be uploaded to the new Blackboard area through Control Panel > Packages and Utilities > Import Package / View Logs. Select the ‘Import Package’ button.

On the Import Package screen upload the zip file that you downloaded from eShare, through the ‘Select a Package’ section. From ‘Select Course Materials’ choose ‘Select All’. Finally click the ‘Submit’ button and wait for the process to complete.

To merge the ‘Child’ course(s) into this new ‘Parent’ course, repeat the process in Part 1a of this guide.
Part 2: Staff Access to Courses

Giving staff access to courses is covered in guide LTD1007: Guide to Enrolling Staff.

Extra Note: Secondary roles

If staff want to see the My Library tab that the students see, they need to be given Secondary Institution Roles.

If you search for a user in ‘System Admin’ and select ‘Edit’ from the dropdown menu, you can edit their institution roles.
Select the name of the faculty from the list of ‘Available Roles’ and click on the arrow to move it to the list of ‘Secondary Institution Roles’. Click the ‘Submit’ button.

This will allow the user to see the ‘My Library’ tab. You can also add a subject/discipline to ensure that they see the same information as the students will see.
Part 3: Troubleshooting Common Student Issues

You might get queries from students if they cannot access Blackboard courses that they expect to. If so, it is worth considering the following things.

- Is the area released to students? The academic member of staff in charge of the section might not have made it available yet.
- Occasionally students can hide courses on the ‘Edit Course List’ page, accessed via the icon on the ‘Courses’ tab.
- For the week at the start of term when students are registering, student course registrations feed through to Blackboard overnight, and the rest of the time the process runs once per hour. This means that it is worth waiting a little while if a student says that they cannot see a course they expect to see, close to the start of term.
- If students cannot see an area that they expect to see, you can check on SID to see if they are registered on the module or programme in question.
- Be aware that with merged areas, students see the name of the area that they are enrolled in, rather than the name of the parent area that this might have been merged into. This can cause confusion if staff are telling them to look for a certain area. While generally the names of child and parent courses are pretty similar, it is worth being aware of the difference.