

Getting Started With WebCT

Technical Requirements

In addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience. Technical requirements include but are not limited to:

Hardware

- A Pentium processor or equivalent Mac system; Windows 98/Me/2000/XP or Mac OS 9.x or OS X 10.x.
- Internet access with 56.6 kbps modem (minimum). A high-bandwidth connection is recommended.
- 128 MB system Ram; 500 MB free disk space or sufficient storage.
- Sound card.
- CD-ROM capabilities.

Software

- Web browser: Internet Explorer, Netscape Navigator, AOL, Firefox, Mozilla or Safari. For WebCT supported browsers and versions, please see the [validated browser list](#). Also see the browser configuration information below.
- MS Office 2000 is the minimum standard. Microsoft software is available at a nominal cost from the UTD/Microsoft Program. Software CDs are available for purchase at the [UTD Technology Store](#). Distance students may download a faxable order form at: "[MSOrder Form](#)" (a PDF file to be opened in [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)). Proof of enrollment (i.e. copy of student ID card) and identification (i.e. copy of Driver's License) are required for ordering. If you don't have a student ID card, you may submit a copy of a fee slip, or use the print-outs of your Account Payment Summary page from [Galaxy](#). Please contact HiEd with any questions regarding shipping orders at: 972-437-3747.
- Virus detection/protection software (such as McAfee).
- "Plug-ins" including (these are free versions available for downloading):
 - [Real Player](#)
 - [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)
 - [Java - Sun Microsystems](#)
 - [Macromedia Flash Player](#)
- A zip file expansion tool such as [WinZip](#) or [Stuffit Expander](#).

Web Browser Configuration

For WebCT courses to work properly, users will need one of the WebCT supported browsers listed in the [validated browser list](#) with Java enabled and cookies enabled. It is also important to set the cache settings of the browser to verify web documents "Every Time". Users should also disable any pop-up blocking for the WebCT site. The methods for configuring these settings vary among browsers. Please go to the [WebCT browser Tune Up](#) page to find more information.

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Course Access and Navigation

Most of our online courses were developed using a web course tool called WebCT. Courses are delivered entirely online. Students will be notified by email about the course access information at the start of the course. Students must have a UTD NetID and password to access the course. New students can go to the UTD NetID page at <http://netid.utdallas.edu> to initiate their account shortly before or at the start of the semester. The UTD NetID and password are to be used as the WebCT ID and password for login. Students can use this account to access all of UTD WebCT courses plus other UTD computing systems (e.g., your UTD email account). Please note that the account password must be updated every 6 months. UTD IR will send users a reminder message to their UTD email accounts prior to the password expiration. To update the account password, please login to the above NetID page. For more information, please visit the [NetID FAQ's](#) page.

The URL for the course login page is: <http://galaxy.utdallas.edu> Once you log into GALAXY, click on the "WebCT" link under "Self Service Links" (in the upper left-hand column). Courses may be accessed at any time after the semester starts. Students are required to meet all assignment and exam deadlines. Participation in scheduled class activities is required. Students should login to the course site regularly (at least three times per week) to check course updates, review lectures, complete assessment tasks, check course emails, and contribute to the discussion board.

Students will see the "My WebCT" page after login. This page lists all courses that students have registered for (including on-campus courses). Students can click the course title to access the course Home Page which displays several icon links. Clicking each icon link will take them to different subsidiary pages containing the course content elements or built-in course tools. Some components such as the Navigation Bar with Course Menu on the left side, the Menu Bar and the path link on the top, and the Action Menu on the content page can help you navigate within the course site.

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WebCT Orientation

For information on how to access your WebCT course, please see the [Getting started: Student WebCT Orientation](#).

Within the course site, students can always click HELP on the WebCT Menu Bar to find information and answers. They can also check out the [Orientation Center to Online Learning and WebCT](#) provided on WebCT's web site. For more WebCT information and its learning resources, visit [WebCT.com](#).



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Communications

WebCT built-in communication tools

There are four built-in communication tools to facilitate learning, communication, interaction, and collaboration. The **Announcements** tool will be used by instructor to post text announcements to the class. Students can keep updated with any course news and notifications by checking the announcement messages. A course communication system, the Discussion tool, allows asynchronous communication among all course participants. Discussion topics or private discussion groups can be set up for class topic discussions and homework assignments. It also serves as a course bulletin board where the instructor can post course announcements and students can exchange information.

Students can use the course Mail tool to communicate privately with the instructor and any class participant. The Chat/Whiteboard tool can be used for real-time communication among course participants. Instructors may schedule times to use the Chat and/or Whiteboard tools for office hours and/or class discussion sessions. Small groups may also use the Chat tool for group discussions. Please see the WebCT Help Menu for more details on using these tools.

Emailing

Besides using the WebCT course internal email, if there is any need, students may contact instructor via external email. UTD provides each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of individuals corresponding, and the security of the transmitted information.

To access UTD email, please go to: <http://galaxy.utdallas.edu> and login with the UTD NetID and password (the same as your WebCT login). The Department of Information Resources at UTD provides a method for students to forward email from other accounts to their UTD address and have their UTD mail sent to other accounts. Students may go to the following URL to establish email forwarding: <http://netid.utdallas.edu>. For any assistance with your UTD email account, call 972-883-2911 or go to <http://www.utdallas.edu/ir/tcs/helpdesk/>.

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Technical Support

UTD Computing Help Desk provides technical assistance with problems on UTD NetID account or problems accessing or using WebCT. Email Support (assist@utdallas.edu), Phone Support (972-883-2911) and Live Web Support are all available. Please check the business hours and other information at [UTD Computing Help Desk Web Site](#).

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