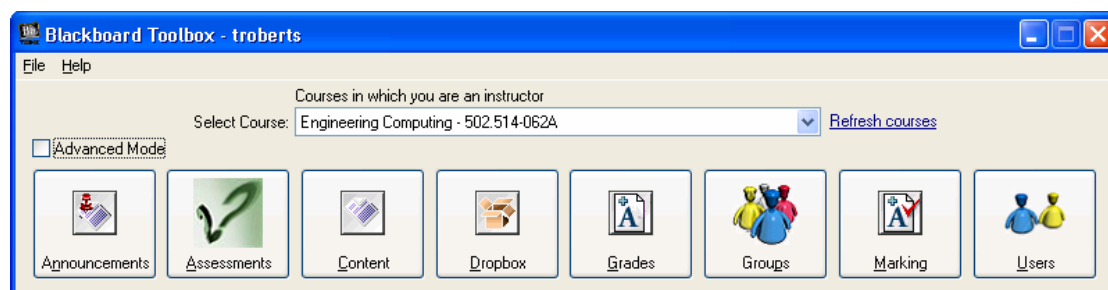


## Blackboard Toolbox – a brief introduction.

*A tool to help teaching staff use Blackboard faster and more efficiently.*



### Notes:

- *This document is not intended to be a complete user guide. It assumes you have some basic computer skills, and already know how to use Blackboard.*
- *BbToolbox is available for the Windows platform only.*

## Assessments

At the beginning of a course, details of the course assessments need to be entered.

The screenshot shows a window titled "Assessments - Online Course - TR". It contains a table with the following data:

Name	Type	PointsPossible	Weight	Available
Exam	Exam	100	60	True
Test 1	Exam	20	20	True
Test 2	Exam	20	20	True

Below the table, there are buttons for "Add", "Delete", and "Edit". To the right, there is a "Totals Availability" section with checkboxes for "Total" and "Weighted Total", both of which are checked. Further down are buttons for "Refresh from Bb", "Save to Bb", and "Close". At the bottom of the window, a summary row shows:

<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>	
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Below the summary row, it says "Last refreshed: 11:29 am Monday 11 September 2006".

Use the Add, Delete and Edit buttons to enter and maintain the assessments for the course. The Available column shows whether this assessment is available for students to view in their gradebook.

The following image shows a sample student gradebook with all assessments available.


COURSES > ONLINE COURSE > TOOLS > MY GRADES

View Grades

Item Name	Date	Grade	Points Possible	Class Average	Weight
Exam	9/11/06 11:24 AM	50	100	55	60%
Test 1	9/11/06 11:23 AM	10	20	15	20%
Test 2	9/11/06	-	20	-	20%
Total		60	140	-	
Weighted Total		40		-	

You might want to hide exam marks. If you make the exam assessment unavailable, it will disappear from the list, but students will still be able to work out their mark as it is reflected in the Total and Weighted Total rows as shown:


COURSES > ONLINE COURSE > TOOLS > MY GRADES

 View Grades

Item Name	Date	Grade	Points Possible	Class Average	Weight
Test 1	9/11/06 11:23 AM	10	20	15	20%
Test 2	9/11/06	-	20	-	20%
Total		60	140	-	
Weighted Total		40		-	

If you are going to make any assessments unavailable, you will probably want to untick the Total and Weighted Total checkboxes as well. This results in the following student view:

COURSES > ONLINE COURSE > TOOLS > MY GRADES

 View Grades

Item Name	Date	Grade	Points Possible	Class Average	Weight
Test 1	9/11/06 11:23 AM	10	20	15	20%
Test 2	9/11/06	-	20	-	20%

In Blackboard it is possible to configure the gradebook display options for an assessment. For example you can choose to display the results for an assessment as a grade, score, complete/incomplete and so on. It is not possible to select these different display options from BbToolbox. (This is a limitation of Blackboard 6). You can still change the display options for assessments from within Blackboard itself though, once you have created them in BbToolbox.

## Groups

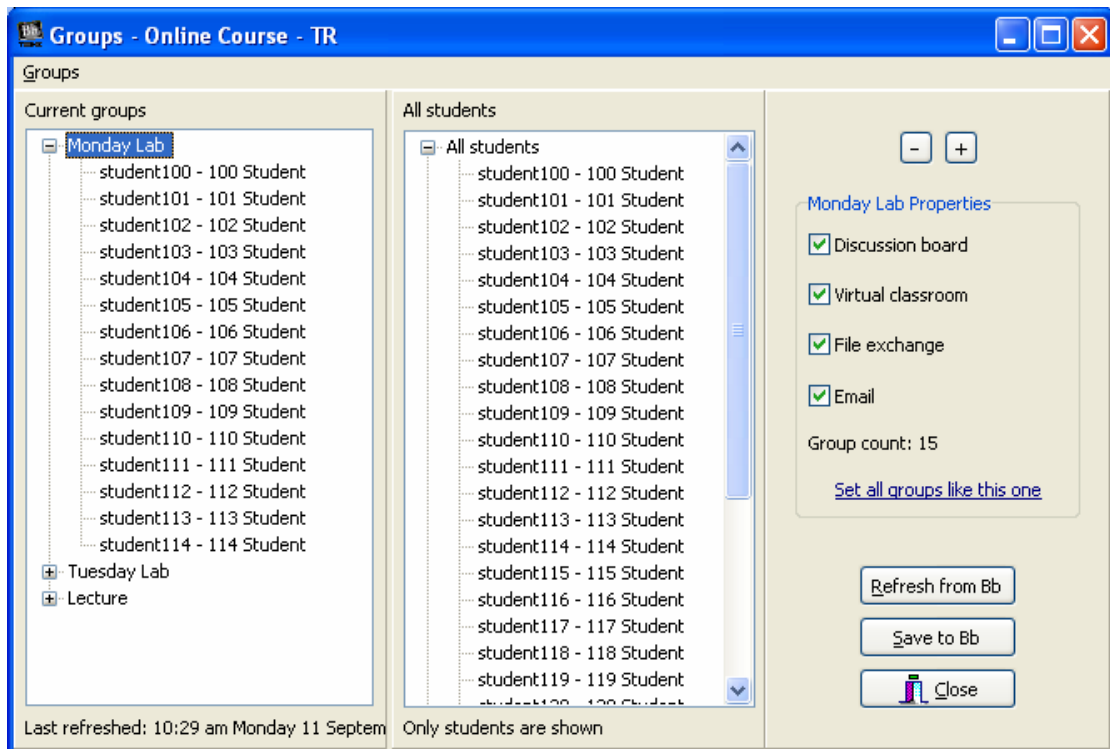
Groups are useful for creating groups of students within a course. For example, you may have several different lab groups in one class.

To create a group, right-click the Current groups treeview and select New Group. You can then drag students into the group. To multi-select students, use the Shift or Control keys while clicking or use the up and down arrow keys.

If you drag students out of the Ungrouped group into your new group, it becomes easy to make sure you have allocated everyone to a group. For example if you drag half the class into a lab group, the remainder show in the Ungrouped group. You can then easily drag the remainder into a second group, thus emptying the Ungrouped group.

If students enrol late in your course, they will appear in the Ungrouped group, making it easy to identify who still needs to be placed in a group.

The following screenshot shows a course with three groups.



Using the group properties box on the right hand side, you can easily set the properties for a group, and then copy those properties to all other groups if you wish.

Apart from other reasons for which you might want to create groups, they are useful within BbToobox for a couple of reasons.

Firstly, the dropbox can be filtered by group. This is useful if you have different tutors marking different groups. There is more information about this in the dropbox section.

Secondly, class lists can be generated by group. This is useful if you print a class list to serve as an attendance register. There is more information about this in the users section.

## **Content**

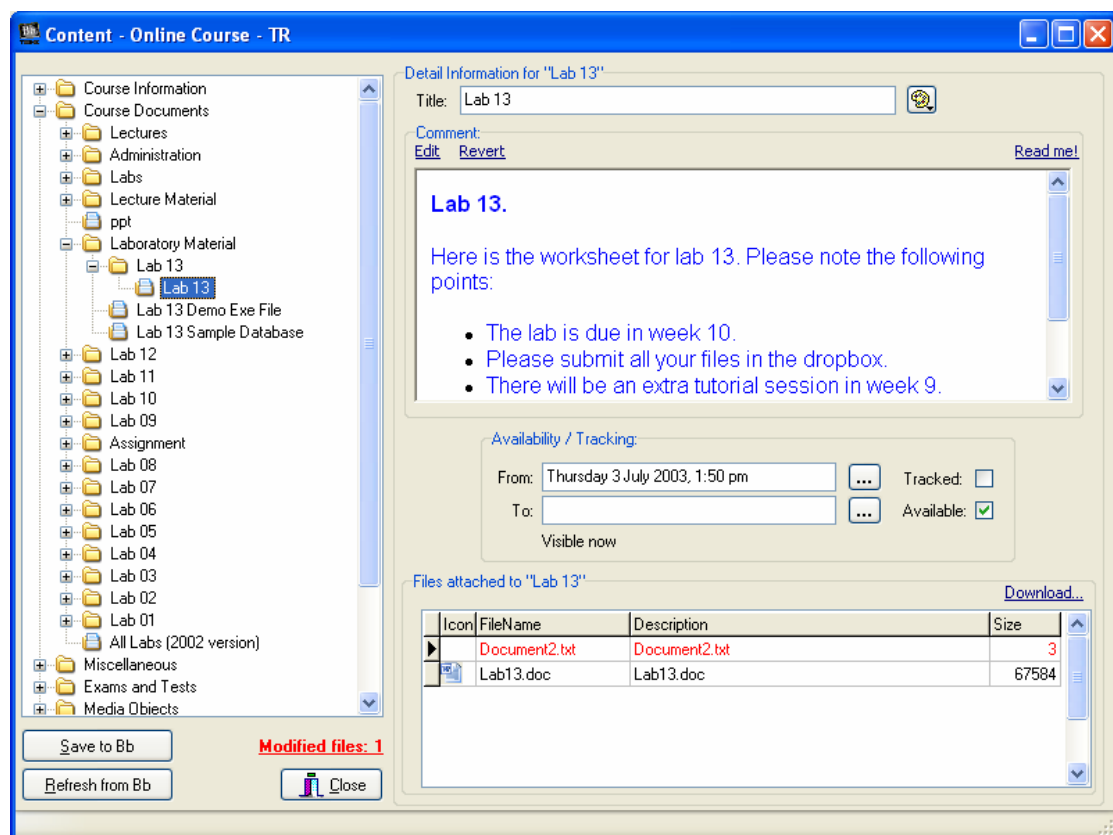
The content building block provides access to Blackboard's content areas. It presents them in a treeview and provides an easy-to-use interface for creating and maintaining content folders and items, as well as managing uploaded files. It is significantly easier and faster to use than the web-based interface available to the content areas in Blackboard.

Right-click on a content folder in the treeview to give options for adding, deleting and renaming folders and items. Folders can contain other folders and items, but not uploaded files. Items can contain uploaded files, but not other folders or items.

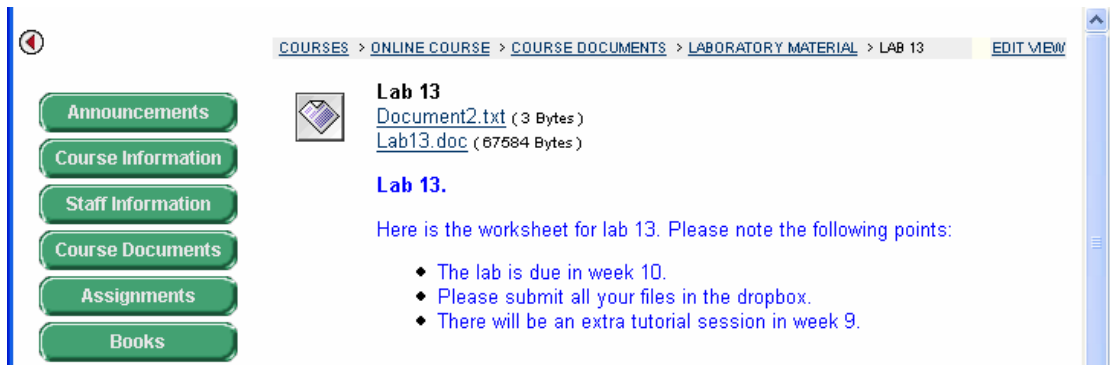
The following screenshot shows a folder called Laboratory Material in the Course Documents folder. Within this folder a folder has been created called Lab 13. Within this folder an item has been created called Lab 13.

In the right-hand part of the screen is the detail information for item Lab 13. The title is shown at the top. You can click the colour chooser to set the colour of the title.

The next pane contains the comment area. To edit a comment, click the Edit link. A WYSIWYG editor allows you to edit the comment and perform simple formatting tasks on it. It is recommended that you only edit comments which were created within BbToolbox, or which contain plain text. If you edit comments which were created in another application and pasted into the comment box (either within BbToolbox or Blackboard itself), it is possible that you will lose some or all of the comment and its formatting.



The item Lab 13 appears in Blackboard as shown (note that this is after the file Document2.txt has been uploaded).



The availability/tracking group allows you to set three options:

- a date range within which the item will be visible to students (as long as it is available)
- the availability (visibility will be subject to the date range if one is specified)
- whether the item is tracked or not (accesses to tracked items are recorded and available in Blackboard for analysis)

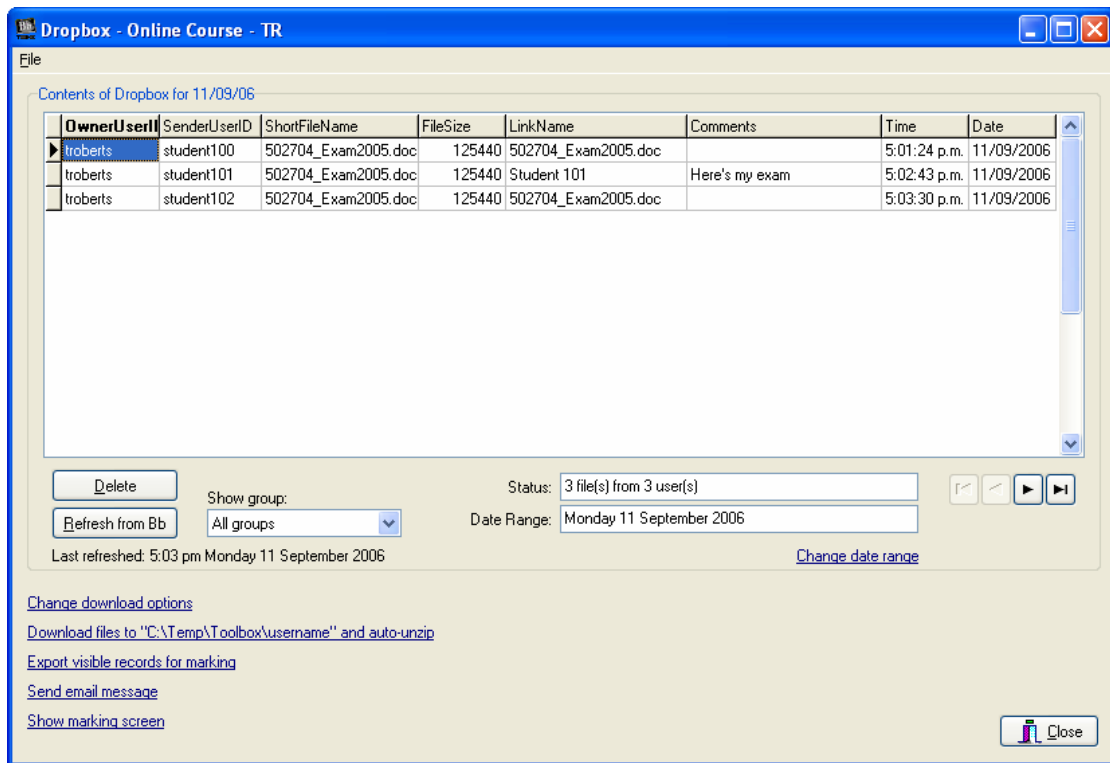
The grid at the bottom of the screen shows any files which have been uploaded to this item.

Files can be uploaded to Blackboard by dragging them from Windows Explorer and dropping them, either on the file grid, or on the item in the treeview. It is possible to select multiple files and drop them ready for uploading. Files which are waiting to be uploaded are shown in red. Clicking the Modified files link will upload the added files to the Blackboard server.

BbToolbox keeps track of the date and time stamp of uploaded files at the time they were uploaded. If you subsequently edit a file, the toolbox will show that file as modified and prompt you to upload it again. Note that this feature only works when you use BbToolbox on the same machine that the file was originally uploaded from.

## ***Dropbox***

The dropbox screen shows you the files that students have submitted in the digital dropbox.

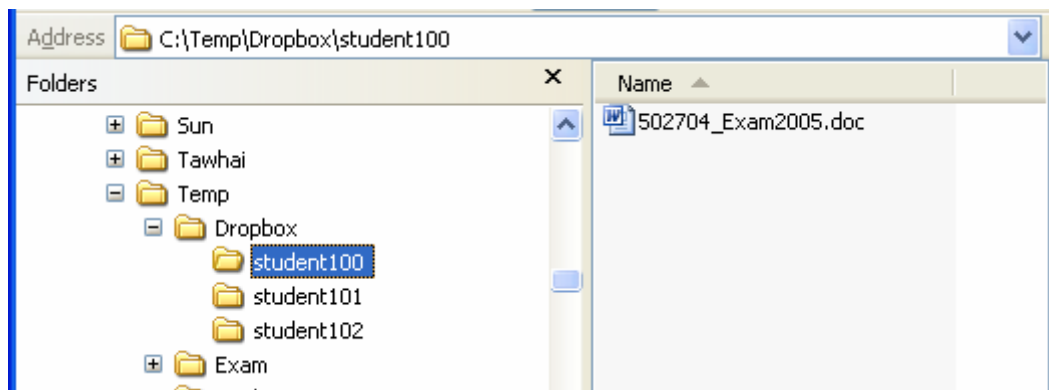


The dropbox grid can be sorted by any of its columns. It can also be filtered by date range and by group. This should make it possible to separate submissions for one assessment from submissions for another.

Single or multiple dropbox records can be deleted.

Submitted files can be downloaded to the local file system. If required, files can be saved into folders named with the submitter's user name. This makes it easy to identify where files came from once they are on the local file system. Downloading files is useful if you are going to mark them manually (for instance they are programming files which need to be opened and tested in a specific application).

The following screenshot shows the result of files from three students having been downloaded to the folder C:\Temp\Dropbox.



Submitted files can also be exported to the marking screen. This is useful for marking files which have been submitted in common formats such as Microsoft Word or Excel. More information about the marking screen can be found later in this document.

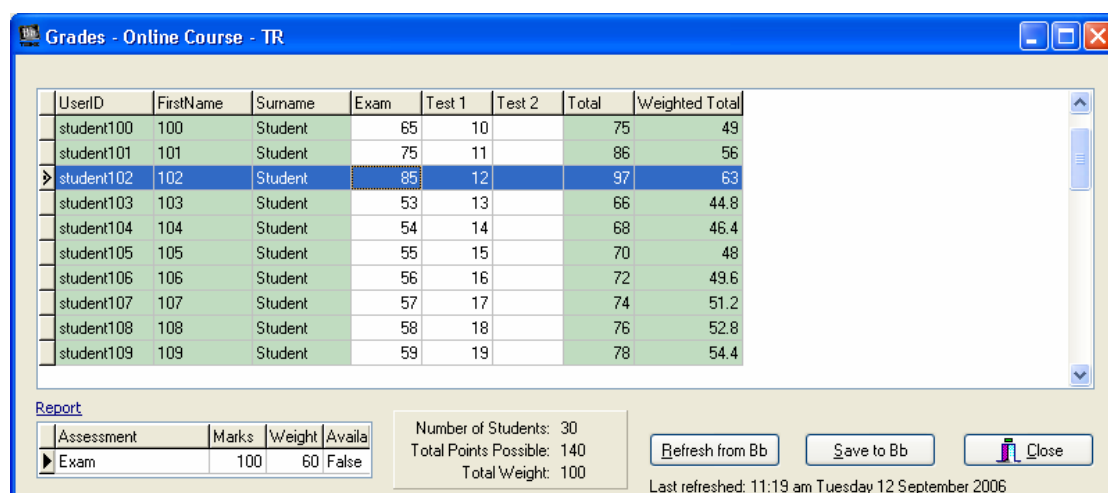
Finally, an email message can be sent to submitters informing them that their submission has been received.

## Grades

The grades screen shows the grades for each student for each assessment, along with each student's total and weighted total. Marks can be easily entered directly into the grid. Data from the grid can also be copied to the clipboard and pasted into a spreadsheet. After manipulation it can be pasted back into the grid if required.

If assessments are marked using the marking screen, grades are automatically transferred into the gradebook.

Students see only their grades in their gradebook. The visibility of each assessment item can be set as described earlier in this document in the Assessments section.



The screenshot shows a window titled "Grades - Online Course - TR" with a table of student grades. The table has columns for UserID, FirstName, Surname, Exam, Test 1, Test 2, Total, and Weighted Total. The data is as follows:

UserID	FirstName	Surname	Exam	Test 1	Test 2	Total	Weighted Total
student100	100	Student	65	10		75	49
student101	101	Student	75	11		86	56
student102	102	Student	85	12		97	63
student103	103	Student	53	13		66	44.8
student104	104	Student	54	14		68	46.4
student105	105	Student	55	15		70	48
student106	106	Student	56	16		72	49.6
student107	107	Student	57	17		74	51.2
student108	108	Student	58	18		76	52.8
student109	109	Student	59	19		78	54.4

Below the table is a "Report" section with a table showing assessment details:

Assessment	Marks	Weight	Availa
Exam	100	60	False

Summary statistics:

- Number of Students: 30
- Total Points Possible: 140
- Total Weight: 100

Buttons: Refresh from Bb, Save to Bb, Close. Last refreshed: 11:19 am Tuesday 12 September 2006

Clicking the Report link generates a report of the assessment results, as shown in the following screenshot.

Report Preview :

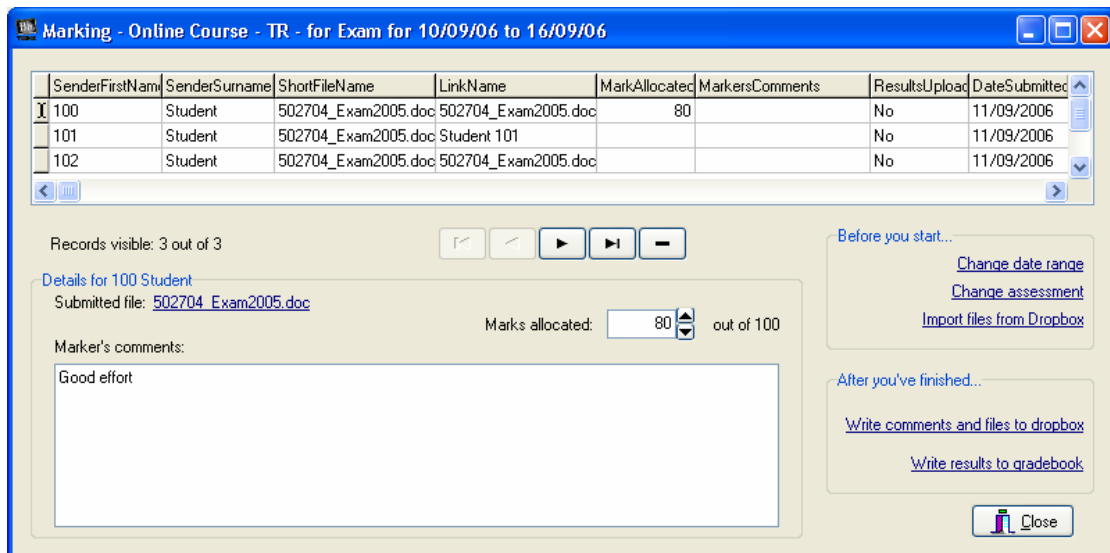
TR Online Course

User ID	Surname	First Name	Exam [100:60]	Test 1 [20:20]	Test 2 [20:20]	Total [140]	Weighted Total [100]
student100	Student	100	80	10		90	58
student101	Student	101	75	11		86	56
student102	Student	102	85	12		97	63
student103	Student	103	53	13		66	44.8
student104	Student	104	54	14		68	46.4
student105	Student	105	55	15		70	48
student106	Student	106	56	16		72	49.6
student107	Student	107	57	17		74	51.2
student108	Student	108	58	18		76	52.8
student109	Student	109	59	19		78	54.4
student110	Student	110	60	20		80	56
student111	Student	111	61			61	36.6
student112	Student	112	62			62	37.2
student113	Student	113	63			63	37.8
student114	Student	114	64			64	38.4
student115	Student	115	65			65	39
student116	Student	116				0	0

## Marking

The Marking screen is useful for marking submissions which can be opened and marked without needing to be downloaded to the local file system. Microsoft Word and Excel documents for example are perfectly suited for marking in this manner.

The Marking screen works in conjunction with the Dropbox screen. Once you have set appropriate filters on the dropbox so that only the submissions you are interested in are visible, click the “Export visible records for marking” link. You will be prompted to select which assessment you are marking. The submissions will then appear in the Marking screen as shown in the following screenshot.

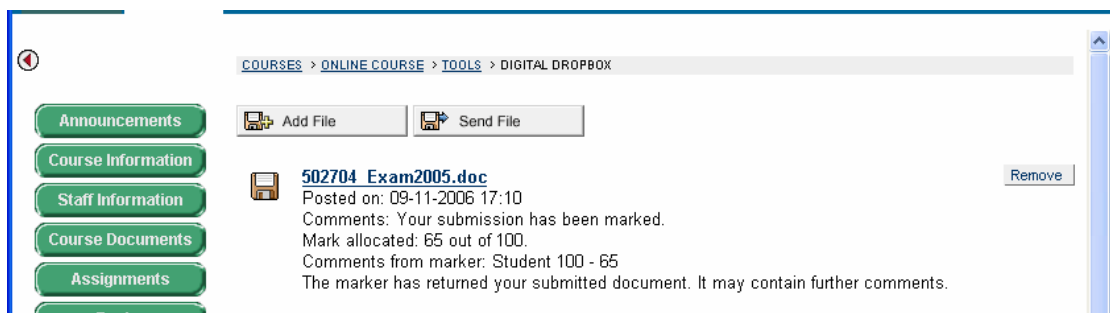


As you select submissions in the grid, details of that submission show in the lower part of the screen. You can enter a mark and any comments you may wish to make. You can also click the Submitted file link, which will download and open the file (as long as you have the appropriate application installed on your machine). If it is a Word file, you can enable change tracking and then write your own comments in the document.

Once you have finished marking, you can choose to write your comments back to the students' dropboxes and save the marks in the gradebook, or just save your marks in the gradebook.

If you write comments and files back to the gradebook, any comments you have made in the comment box will be inserted in the student's dropbox. In addition if you have added comments to a submitted file, that file will be uploaded to the student's dropbox.

The following screenshot shows a student's view of their dropbox with a returned file and additional comments.



## Users

The Users screen shows all users for the course, as can be seen in the following screenshot.

Users - Online Course - TR

UserID	FirstName	Surname	EmailAddr	StudentId	Role
student100	100	Student	student100@man		STUDENT
student101	101	Student	student101@man		STUDENT
student102	102	Student	student102@man		STUDENT
student103	103	Student	student103@man		STUDENT
student104	104	Student	student104@man		STUDENT
student105	105	Student	student105@man		STUDENT
student106	106	Student	student106@man		STUDENT
student107	107	Student	student107@man		STUDENT
student108	108	Student	student108@man		STUDENT
student109	109	Student	student109@man		STUDENT
student110	110	Student	student110@man		STUDENT
student111	111	Student	student111@man		STUDENT
student112	112	Student	student112@man		STUDENT
student113	113	Student	student113@man		STUDENT
student114	114	Student	student114@man		STUDENT
student115	115	Student	student115@man		STUDENT

Users are loaded into Bb automatically from the LDAP server and cannot be edited either here or in Bb.  
 Student count: 30, Staff count: 1  
 Last refreshed: 1:08 pm Tuesday 12 September 2006  
[Report](#)

Show students  Show staff

Clicking the Report link generates an attendance report. The reports can be selected by group, which is useful if you have created groups for tutorial or lab sessions. The printed report can be passed around the class for students to sign.

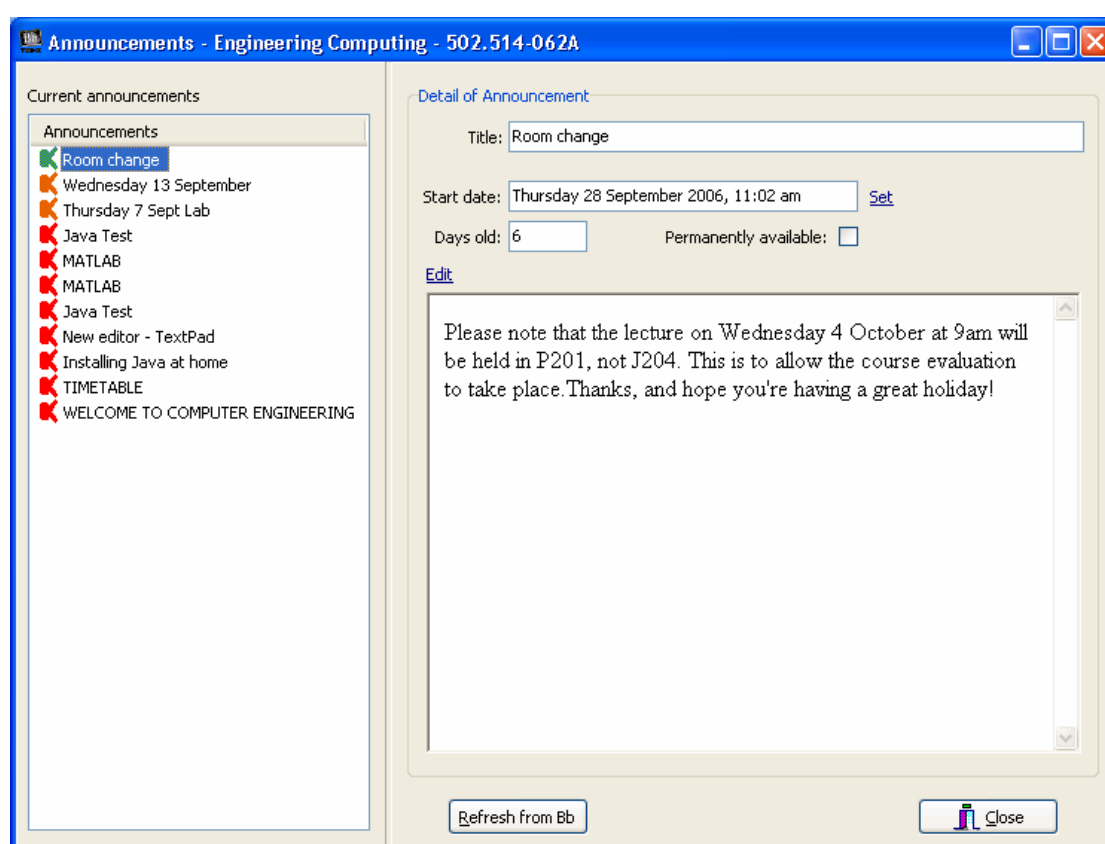
TR Online Course Group Monday Lab 12/09/2006

Name	Signature	Arrival Time
Student 100		
Student 101		
Student 102		
Student 103		
Student 104		
Student 105		

## Announcements

The announcements screen shows all the announcements for the course in the list view on the left hand side. These announcements are colour-coded, corresponding to the number of days old they are. This is useful because Blackboard only shows announcements up to 7 days old by default. Announcements up to 30 days old, and over 30 days old are shown on separate tabs.

Green indicates that the announcement is up to 7 days old (and thus shows in the default Blackboard announcement screen). Orange indicates that the announcement is more than 7 but up to 30 days old. Red indicates that the announcement is more than 30 days old, and black indicates that the announcement is permanently displayed.



In this screen you can create, delete and edit announcements. You can make them permanently available, and also set their start date to any day you wish. This latter feature is useful because you can quickly and easily set the start date for an old announcement to the current day, thus making it display on the default Blackboard announcements page.