CUSTOMIZING YOUR COURSE
LOOK AND FEEL
A QUICK START GUIDE
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Look and Feel Overview

Overview: Four Brightspace tools allow you to customize the look and feel of your course to meet your needs.

Widgets
Individual blocks of content that appear on your course homepage

Homepage
Determines the organization of widgets on the page

Navigation
Determines which links appear in the course navigation area

Theme
Determines the background, fonts, and other aspects of your course appearance
OVERVIEW: There are a number of existing system widgets that can be added to your course homepage. You can also create custom widgets so that resources most relevant to your course can immediately be available when students enter.

**Widgets**

The widget is a block of content that displays on your course homepage. Widgets can be used to create links to important external resources, embed media or news feeds, or add other types of content that you want available immediately when students enter your course.

**Suggested Workflow for Using Custom Widgets**

The trickiest aspect of working with widgets is remembering to add them to the active homepage. We recommend the following workflow.

1. **Create a new widget**
2. **Add the widget to a custom homepage**
3. **Make sure the custom homepage is active**

**Accessing Widgets**

Do one of the following:
- Click on **Widgets** in the **Course Administration** widget under **Site Setup**.
- Click **Edit Course** in the right-hand side of the course navigation. Then click on **Widgets**.
**Widgets**

**Using An Existing Widget**
To use an existing widget in your course, you must add the widget to a custom homepage. See the section on [Homepages](#) for information on adding an existing widget to your course homepage.

**Creating A New Widget**
1. At the top of the list of available widgets, click the blue **Create Widgets** button.

   ![Create Widgets](image)

2. Enter a name for your widget.
3. (Optional) Click on the **Release Conditions** tab and create conditions that determine who will see your widget.
4. Click on the **Content** tab and enter the contents of your widget.

   *Note: Your widget will only appear on your course homepage once the widget has been added to the active homepage. See the section on homepages for help.*

**Modifying A Widget Style**
1. In the list of custom widgets, click on the **Customize** icon.
2. Modify the widget settings, such as titlebar color and shape.
3. Click **Save**.
OVERVIEW: Homepages organize all of the information on your course home that is below the navigation. The most typical type of homepage is widget-based, but you can also display a tool like the Content tool or display an external URL. This tutorial offers support on the most common homepage type, the widget-based homepage.

**Homepages**
The homepage determines the content displayed beneath the navbar in your course. In most cases, it will be used to organize widgets. It can be one, two, or three columns.

**Suggested Workflow for Using Custom Homepages**
Because working with homepages can be tricky, we recommend the following workflow. This will allow you to modify a copy of one of the default homepages.

1. **Copy an existing homepage**
2. **Rename and modify the copy**
3. **Make the new homepage active**

**Accessing Homepages**
Do one of the following:
- Click on Homepages in the Course Administration widget under Site Setup.
- Click Edit Course in the right-hand side of the course navigation. Then click on Homepages.
**Homepages**

**Using an Existing Homepage**
1. At the top of the list of existing homepages, locate the **Active Homepage** dropdown menu.
2. Select the homepage you would like to use from the dropdown menu.
3. Click **Apply**.

**Copying a Homepage**
1. In the list of existing homepages, click on the triangle dropdown menu to the right of the homepage you would like to copy.
2. Select **Copy**.
3. This will create a copy of the homepage that you can edit.

**Modifying a Copied Homepage**

*Note: If you make a mistake while modifying a copied homepage, remember you can make a new copy of the homepage.*

1. Locate the copied homepage in the list of available homepages (it should have “-copy” at the end of the name).
2. Click on the name of the homepage.
3. Enter a name for the homepage.
4. In the Layout section, select a panel layout and click Update.
5. **To add a widget to a panel**, click the Add Widgets button in the lower right of the panel.
6. **To delete a widget from a panel**, hover over the widget and click the ‘X’.
7. **To move a widget to another panel**, drag and drop the widget in the new location.

**Setting a Homepage as Active**
1. Locate the **Active Navbar** heading above the list of navbars available in your course.
2. Select the navbar from the **Active Navbar** dropdown menu.
3. Click **Apply**.
**Overview:** Default Navbars cannot be modified. However, you can modify copies. When customizing the navigation or theme of your course for the first time, we suggest that you copy an existing Navbar or Theme. Then modify the copy of the Navbar or Theme to suit your needs.

**Suggested Workflow for Using Custom Navigation**
Because it is easy to forget important links when creating a navigation, we recommend the following workflow. This will allow you to modify one of the default navbars.

1. **Copy an existing navbar**
2. **Rename and modify the copy**
3. **Make the new Navbar active**

**Accessing Navigation**
Do one of the following:
- Click on **Navigation & Themes** in the **Course Administration** widget under **Site Setup**.
- Click **Edit Course** in the right-hand side of the course navigation. Then click on **Navigation & Themes**.

**Using an Existing Navbar**
1. Make sure that you are in the **Navbar** section in **Navigation & Themes**.
2. At the top of the list of existing navbars, locate the **Active Navbar** dropdown menu.
3. Select the Navbar you would like to use from the dropdown menu.
4. Click **Apply**.

**Copying the Course Default Navbar**
1. Make sure that you are in the **Navbar** section in **Navigation & Themes**.
2. Click on the triangle dropdown menu to the right of the **Course Default** navbar.
Navigatin

3. Select Copy.
4. This will create a new navbar called Course Default – Copy that you can now modify.

Modifying the Copied Navbar

Note: If you make a mistake while modifying a copied navigation, remember you can make a new copy of the default navigation.

1. Locate the Course Default – Copy navbar in the list of navbars.
2. Click on the linked words Course Default – Copy to begin editing the navbar.
3. Edit the name of the navbar.
4. (Optional) Click Change Theme to alter the theme.
5. The default navigation has four zones where you can add or remove links. In most cases we recommend that you ONLY make changes to the bottom-left navigation zone.
6. The bottom-left navigation zone has one individual link and four link groups. (See chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Link</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Home</td>
<td>Individual Link</td>
<td>Returns students to the course homepage. Please do not remove this link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments</td>
<td>Link Group</td>
<td>A group of links to assessment tools including Dropbox, Grades, Quizzes, Rubrics, Self Assessments, and Surveys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Link Group</td>
<td>A group of links to communication tools including Chat, Classlist, Discussions, Email, Groups, and News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Link Group</td>
<td>A group of links to resources including Attendance, Calendar, Content, Checklist, FAQ, Glossary and Links</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. To Add a Link to a Zone:
   • Click the Add Link button in the bottom right of the zone.
   • Select the link to add.
   • Click the Add button at the bottom of the window.

8. To Edit a Link Group in a Zone:
   • Click on the link group.
   • Click Edit group properties
   • Click the ‘X’ next to any link you would like to remove.
   • Click Save.
   • Click Hide Properties to return to the editing Navbar.

9. Click Save and Close.

Setting a Navbar as Active

1. Locate the Active Navbar heading above the list of navbars available in your course.
2. Select the navbar from the Active Navbar dropdown menu.
3. Click Apply.
Themes

Overview: Default Navbars and Themes cannot be modified. However, you can modify copies of these items. When customizing the navigation or theme of your course for the first time, we suggest that you copy an existing Navbar or Theme. Then modify the copy of the Navbar or Theme to suit your needs.

Theme

The theme is what governs the overall look and feel of your course. It determines the fonts, the background, and other aspects of your course appearance.

Suggested Workflow for Using Custom Themes

Because themes are the most complicated tool used to customize the course look and feel, we recommend the following workflow. This will allow you to modify one of the default themes.

- Copy an existing theme
- Rename and modify the copy
- Change the theme in the current navigation

Accessing Themes

Do one of the following:

- Click on Navigation & Themes in the Course Administration widget under Site Setup. Then click on the Themes button at the top of the page.
- Click Edit Course. Then click on Navigation & Themes. Then click on the Themes button at the top of the page.
**Themes**

**Using an Existing Theme**
To use an existing theme in your course, you select theme when modifying a custom nav bar. See the section on Navigation for information on using an existing theme for your course.

**Copying a Theme**
1. Make sure that you are in the Themes section in Navigation & Themes.
2. Click on the triangle dropdown menu to the right of a theme.
3. Select Copy.
4. This will create a new theme that you can now modify.

**Modifying a Copied Theme**
1. Locate the copied theme (it should have “-copy” at the end of the name).
2. Click on the linked name of the theme to begin editing the theme.
3. Enter a name for the theme.
4. Click in a zone in either the navbar or the page section to modify its look and feel.
5. Click Save and Close.

**Adding a Theme to the Current Navigation**
1. While viewing the list of available themes, click on the Navigation link to the left of the Theme and Navigation links at the top of the page.
2. Click on the name of the current active navigation. (If the current active navigation is one of the default system-level navigations, you will have to make a copy of the default navigation in order to change the theme.)
3. Click on the Change Theme button and select your new theme.
4. Click Save.