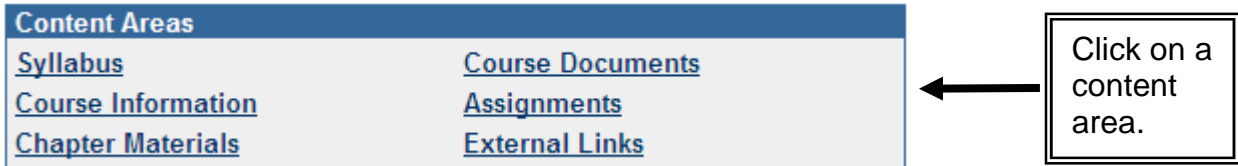


## Add External Link to Content Area

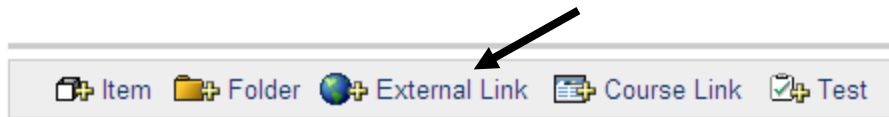
Links to outside web sites can be added to content areas as external links. By adding external links to your course you can point your students to web pages and Internet resources whose contents are not saved inside of your Blackboard course but are instead located on the Internet.

1. To add an external link to a content area, go to the **Control Panel** and select the content area you want to add the external link to.

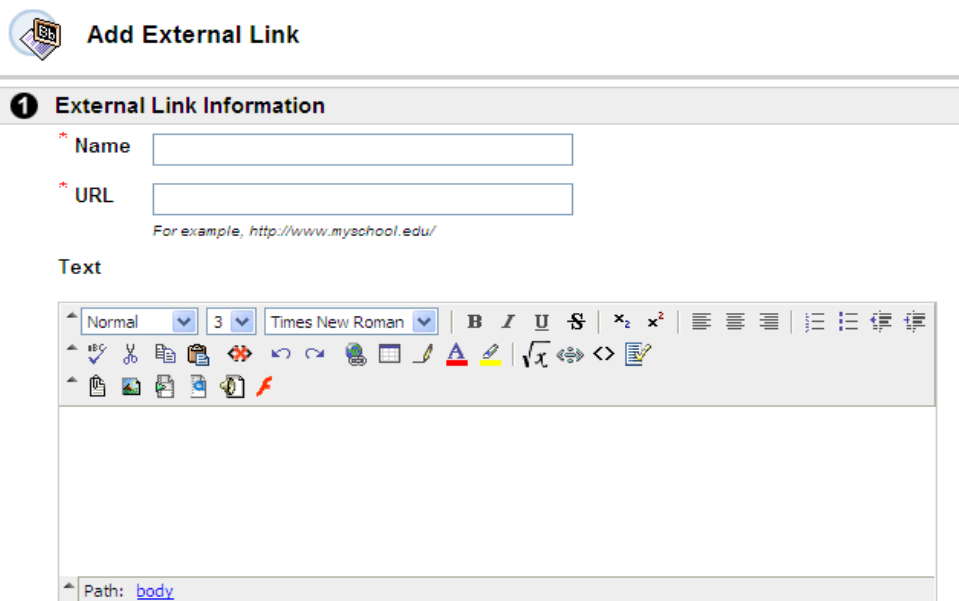


Note: If the content area you would like to add the external link to does not exist, you can create it by following the instructions for customizing the course menu.

2. On the tool bar, select the **External Link** button.



3. You should see the External Link Information form. Enter a name for the link in the **Name** field and the **URL** of the link in the URL field. In the Text box you can enter a description or whatever information you want to appear below the external link.



The image shows a screenshot of the 'Add External Link' form. The form has a title 'Add External Link' with a small icon. Below the title is a section titled '1 External Link Information'. This section contains two required fields: 'Name' and 'URL'. Below the 'URL' field is a small text example: 'For example, http://www.myschool.edu/'. Below the 'URL' field is a 'Text' area with a rich text editor toolbar. The toolbar includes options for font style (Normal), font size (3), font color (Times New Roman), bold (B), italic (I), underline (U), strikethrough (ABC), text color (x), background color (x), bulleted list, numbered list, link, unlink, and insert link. Below the toolbar is a large text area for entering the description. At the bottom of the form, there is a 'Path' field with the value 'body'.

Note: When entering a URL, always enter the full Web address of the link. For example, enter <http://www.xula.edu>, not [www.xula.edu](http://www.xula.edu) or [xula.edu](http://www.xula.edu).

4. If you would like to attach a file to the entry for this external link you should, click the **Browse** button in the Content section and navigate to find the file on your computer. In the **“Name of Link to File”** box, enter the name that users will see (in the content area) for the attached file. Users will select this link to open the file. Three special actions are available. A description of the special actions is listed below. If you just want to attach the file to the external link, you should choose the **“Create a link to this file”** special action.

**2 Content**

Files can be attached to the above information. Click **Browse** to select the file to attach and specify a name for the link to this file.

Attach local file

Name of Link to File

Special Action

### Special Actions

The Special Action field allows users to select the behavior of files attached to an item. The following Special Actions are available:

- **Create a link to this file:** Attach the file to the item. A link is automatically inserted below the document title to access the file.
- **Display media file within the page:** Display media file within the page: Embed certain kinds of media within the page itself instead of creating a link. When this option is selected, the file will not appear in the Currently Attached Files field after the page is submitted. The image or image tag for the file will appear in the Text Box Editor. (The image may appear in a black or transparent box.) If this option is selected, the attached file must be a format recognizable by Blackboard. If it is not, a link to the file is automatically created.
- **Unpackage this file:** Indicates to the system that the file must be unpackaged before displaying.

5. Under **Options** choose the appropriate options for content availability, tracking views and any date/time restrictions, then click submit.

**3 Options**

Make the content available  Yes  No

Track number of views  Yes  No

Choose date and time restrictions  Display After  Display Until

Dec 08 2009 03 15 PM

Dec 08 2009 03 15 PM

**4 Submit**

Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to quit.

\* Required Field

Note: When attaching files you should use common file types, such as Microsoft Office documents, PDFs, RTFs, GIFs and JPEGs, for your files. The file size should be kept to a minimum to ensure that the document is accessible by students on slower internet connections. If you are unable to reduce the file size, you should use the text box in the Add External Link Information section to provide your students with information describing what the file is, how large the file is, and why it is important that they view the file. Providing your students with this information will let them know that they have to wait longer for the file to download.

There are several characters that you should avoid when naming files. To reduce the number of errors when uploading and downloading files, follow these naming conventions:

- Use only letters, numbers, underscores, and hyphens in file names
- Do not use spaces, commas, pound signs (#), question marks, equal signs, ampersands (&), asterisks (\*), or any other special characters in file names
- Use hyphens or underscores in place of spaces in file names
- Do not use periods in a file name, except before the file extension (e.g. "Research\_paper.doc")
- Keep file names under 60 characters in length

Filenames should be less than 60 characters in order to avoid having the filename unexpectedly truncated when moving between different computer platforms (e.g. moving between Windows and Apple Macintosh computers).

Filenames should include the file type extension so that they can be recognized and opened by the appropriate application on another computer. Common extensions are:

.doc or .docx for Microsoft Word documents  
.xls or .xlsx for MS Excel files  
.ppt or .pptx for MS Powerpoint files  
.pdf for files in portable document format (PDF)  
.jpg for JPEG images such as photographs  
.txt for plain text files