

The Sectioning Tool

The Sectioning Tool is a course management utility designed to help faculty and staff manage the assignment of students into course sections, including:

- Precepts
- Drills
- Ear trainings
- Films
- Classes (related to a lecture or seminar) – at the request of the department
- Labs (related to a lecture or seminar) – at the request of the department

There are two means of assigning students to sections using the Blackboard Sectioning Tool:

- Automatic sorting, which is based on preferences expressed by students through the *Student Preference Tool*, and
- Manual sorting

Both methods of section assignment are described in more detail, later in this document.

In addition to the sorting capabilities of the Sectioning Tool, its interface with Blackboard provides the means for those with Blackboard course roles of instructor, TA, and course builder to communicate with respective section members through e-mail, as a single group.

Note that only one user is permitted to use the sectioning tool for a particular course at a time.

Creating sections

For sections to be available for both assignment and student preference selection in Blackboard, they must be correctly scheduled in the PeopleSoft Course Information System (CIS) by your department's CIS coordinator.

If a new section is desired, the section must first be created in CIS. Updates to sections in CIS, whether additions, deletions, or meeting time changes, appear in Blackboard within a few hours of entry into CIS. The transfer of information from CIS to Blackboard is not immediate.

Contact your department's CIS coordinator regarding changes to sections.

Accessing the Tool

The sectioning tool is available to those with Blackboard course roles of instructor, TA, and course builder. Only one user is permitted access to the sectioning tool for a particular course at one time.

To access the sectioning tool for a course:

1. Log on to Blackboard at:
www.princeton.edu/blackboard
2. Select the **Courses** tab and choose the course.
3. Select the **Control Panel** option in the side menu.
4. Under the category Course Tools, click the **Sectioning Tool** link.
5. The page that opens will offer you two choices: **Sectioning Tool** or **Enable/Configure Student Preference Tool**.

COURSES > SOC250_S2005 THE WESTERN WAY OF WAR > CONTROL PANEL > SECTIONING TOOLS

Sectioning Tools for SOC250_S2005

Precept Section

- ▶ **Sectioning Tool**
To sort or manually assign course members to precepts.
- ▶ **Enable/Configure Student Preference Tool**
To enable and configure the student precept preference tool.

OK

If you have already enabled the students to use the Student Preference Tool, or do not wish to give them that option, select **Sectioning Tool**.

If you wish to allow students to indicate section preferences so you can subsequently sort by those preferences, select **Enable/Configure Student Preference Tool**.

Need help using the Blackboard sectioning tool:

Consult the **online help** provided within the sectioning tool

Call the **OIT Help Desk** at (609) 258-HELP

Contact **Blackboard** to schedule individual or group training at (609) 258-0737

Search the **OIT KnowledgeBase** at www.princeton.edu/kb

Assigning students to sections

1. Select the **Control Panel** option in the side menu.
2. Under the category **Course Tools**, click the **Sectioning Tool** link.
3. On the page that opens, select the first option, **Sectioning Tool**.

A list of students who have enrolled in the course and the sections defined for the course will be presented. You can sort the students into the sections either automatically or manually.

Name	Year	Group
Armstrong, Carol	NA	INS
Chen, Jennifer	NA	INS
Cole, Kelly	NA	INS
Hood, Matthew	NA	INS
Hulick, Paula	NA	INS
Wright, Alastair	NA	INS
Bourneuf, Anne	NA	TA
Foa, Michelle	NA	TA
Killeen, Maureen	NA	TA
Kitnick, Alexander	Precept P02	TA
Shieh, Rosalyne	Precept P01	TA
Adams, Jamie	07	Precept P05, STU
Arbisser, Lily	07	NA, STU
Ardila, Carolina	07	NA, STU
Ashenhurst, James	07	NA, STU
Ault, Taylor	07	NA, STU
Austin, Wayne	06	NA, STU
Becker, Ryan	08	NA, STU
Bennett, Briana	06	NA, STU

Group(s)	Max	In	Day/Time/Location	Section	Instructor
Precept P01	15	1	Th,11:00 AM-11:50 AM MCCCKH:274	42392	Bourneuf
Precept P02	15	1	Th,12:30 PM-1:20 PM MCCCKH:274	42912	Foa
Precept P03	15	1	Th,1:30 PM-2:20 PM MCCCKH:274	42913	Bourneuf
Precept P04	15	0	Th,2:30 PM-3:20 PM MCCCKH:274	42914	Foa
Precept P05	15	2	Th,3:30 PM-4:20 PM MCCCKH:274	42915	Foa
Precept P06	15	0	W,3:30 PM-4:20 PM MCCCKH:274	42916	Wright
Precept P07	15	0	T,11:00 AM-11:50 AM MCCCKH:274	42924	Shieh
Precept P08	15	0	W,10:00 AM-10:50 AM MCCCKH:274	42926	Kitnick
Precept P09	15	0	W,11:00 AM-11:50 AM MCCCKH:274	43008	Kitnick
Precept P10	15	1	W,12:30 PM-1:20 PM MCCCKH:274	43009	Shieh

Sort Automatically place students into groups based on their Precept Preferences.

Update Save changes

Notify Send e-mail to students whose section status has changed and return to Control Panel.

OK Save changes and return to Control Panel

Cancel Do not save and return to Control Panel

Automatic Sorting

To automatically assign students to sections using the Sectioning Tool, click the **Sort** button.

The sorting process may take a while to assign the students because it is checking against each student's schedule for possible scheduling conflicts.

Clicking **Update** saves your changes and keeps you on this screen.

Clicking **OK** saves your changes and returns you to the Control Panel.

Clicking **Cancel** returns you to the Control Panel without saving your changes.

Clicking **Notify** saves the section assignments, sends an e-mail message to students who have been assigned to a section notifying them of the section assignment, and returns you to the Control Panel.

Manual Sorting


To manually assign the student to sections:

1. In the right pane, click the **[+]** (Show/Hide) button for the course section to which you want to assign students.
2. In the left pane, highlight the name of the student (or instructor, or TA) you want to assign to the section.
(Use Shift+Click to select a range of consecutive names and Ctrl+Click to select multiple, non-consecutive members in the list.)
3. Click the **▶** (Add to Group List) button to add the highlighted individual or individuals to the section group.
4. Save or cancel your changes:
 - Click **Update** to save your changes and remain on the Sectioning Tool screen.
 - Click **OK** to save your changes and return to the Control Panel.
 - Click **Cancel** to return to the Control Panel without saving your changes.

The Sectioning Preference Tool for students

Enabling the Sectioning Preference Tool

1. Click the **Control Panel** option in the side menu.
2. Under **Course Tools**, click the **Sectioning Tool** link.
3. On the page that opens, click on the second option **Enable/Configure Student Preference Tool**.
4. Set the Start and End dates in section ❶ Student Section Preference Tool Availability.

For your convenience, you may also use the  calendar icon to pick dates. Be mindful of setting the times that you would like to become available and unavailable on the dates indicated. These dates are only for the current term and course. You must set new dates and times for any other individual courses you are managing.

Setting Announcement Information and Email to All Students messages


You may use either the default message for both the Announcement Information ❷ and Email to All Students ❸, or you can edit and create your own message. It is suggested that you leave course site link intact.

The default message reads:

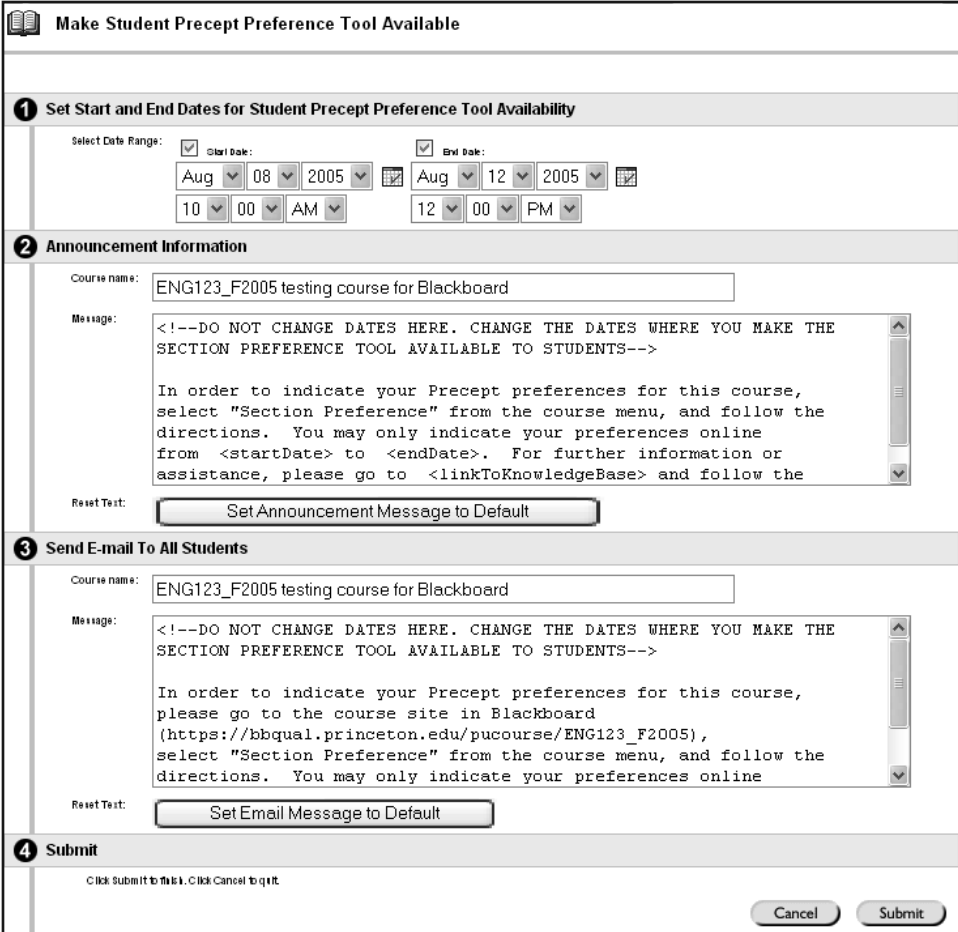
"In order to indicate your Class preferences for this course, select "Section Preference" from the course menu, and follow the directions. You may only indicate your preferences online from <startDate> to <endDate>. For further information or assistance, please go to <linkToKnowledgeBase> and follow the directions on how to select a section."

The <startDate> and <endDate> variables will be populated with the specific dates entered in section ❶.

Posting Announcements and distributing e-mail messages

To post the Announcement Information message and distribute the E-mail to All Students message to all students enrolled in the course, click the  button.

If you wish to cancel the operation (prior to clicking Submit, of course) click .




The screenshot shows a web form titled "Make Student Precept Preference Tool Available". It is divided into four numbered sections:


- 1 Set Start and End Dates for Student Precept Preference Tool Availability:** This section contains two date pickers. The "Start Date" is set to August 08, 2005 at 10:00 AM. The "End Date" is set to August 12, 2005 at 12:00 PM. There are checkboxes for "Select Date Range:" and "Start Date:" and "End Date:". A "Reset Text:" button labeled "Set Announcement Message to Default" is located below the date pickers.
- 2 Announcement Information:** This section has a "Course name:" field with the text "ENG123_F2005 testing course for Blackboard". Below it is a "Message:" text area containing a default message with HTML-like placeholders: "<!--DO NOT CHANGE DATES HERE. CHANGE THE DATES WHERE YOU MAKE THE SECTION PREFERENCE TOOL AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS-->" and "In order to indicate your Precept preferences for this course, select "Section Preference" from the course menu, and follow the directions. You may only indicate your preferences online from <startDate> to <endDate>. For further information or assistance, please go to <linkToKnowledgeBase> and follow the". A "Reset Text:" button labeled "Set Announcement Message to Default" is at the bottom.
- 3 Send E-mail To All Students:** This section is identical to section 2, with the same course name and message text. The "Reset Text:" button is labeled "Set Email Message to Default".
- 4 Submit:** This section contains a small instruction: "Click Submit to finish. Click Cancel to quit." At the bottom right of the form are two buttons: "Cancel" and "Submit".

Sorting the students

The students can be sorted at any time (either manually, automatically, during and after preference selection). If this sorting is done during the defined time frame for the students to select their preferences, the tool will operate on a first come, first served logic. If the user does not sort students until the end of the defined time frame, the tool will sort the students randomly, taking into account student preferences only, regardless of when the student indicated his/her preferences.

Notifying students of section assignments

After section assignments are made, click  to send an e-mail message to students with new or revised section assignment, notifying them of the section to which they have been assigned.

Clicking  will automatically send an e-mail message to students regarding their section assignment. This feature may be used more than once as the tool is programmed to notify only those students with new or revised section assignments.

Sending e-mail to section members

A Blackboard group is automatically created for every course section. These section-specific Blackboard groups include all members of the course section, and can be used to e-mail information and updates to the members of the section.

To send e-mail to a particular course section group from within Blackboard:

1. Select the **Courses** tab and choose the course.
2. Select the **Communications** option in the side menu.
3. Click the **Send Email** link.
4. Click the **Select Groups** link.
5. Select the checkbox for the section group to which you want to send e-mail.
6. Type a subject line and your message and click **Submit**.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where do I find the sectioning tool?

The sectioning tool is available through the Blackboard course management site at:


www.princeton.edu/blackboard

It is located in the Control Panel, among the Course Tools.

Who can use this tool?

The sectioning tool is available to those with Blackboard course roles of instructor, TA, and course builder. Only one user is permitted access to the sectioning tool for a particular course at a time.

What do I do when I receive an alert that there is a scheduling conflict?

If you encounter a scheduling conflict when assigning a student to a section, you can click the OK button to add the student to the section despite the alert. To remove the student from the assigned section, highlight the student's name in the assigned section and click the  (Remove from Group List) button.

What about students who enroll in a course during or after the Student Preference dates?

Students who enroll in a course after the dates have been set for the Student Preference part of the tool will receive an email from Blackboard informing them of the dates for indicating their section preferences. Students who enroll in a course after the End Date for the Student Preferences must be manually assigned to a section.