

Frequently Asked Technical Questions

The first step in resolving any technical problem is to make sure that you meet the technical requirements. A basic requirement for taking a PLS online course is to have a working computer with an Internet connection and an active email account. The following technical requirements apply:

- Preferred Operating Systems: Windows 2000, Windows XP, or Mac OS 10.3.
- Preferred Browsers: For an optimal experience use Internet Explorer 6.1 (PC), Internet Explorer 5.2 (Mac), or Safari 1.2 (Mac). Blackboard does not operate properly when using AOL.
- Required Software: Microsoft Word.
- Required Web Browser Plug-In: A recent version of Adobe® Acrobat® or Adobe® Reader™. Adobe® Reader™ is a free program to download. Go to <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html> and follow the instructions on the Adobe® Web site.

*Note: The following answers apply to PC users. Mac users should refer to the **Support** tab in their course.*

Q: How do I get tech support?

A: You have four options for getting support:

1. You should first click on the **Support** tab within your course, which gives you 24/7 Blackboard support. You will be able to find answers to most technical questions on one of the following **Support** pages:
 - Home: This page links to excellent animated tutorials. Unfortunately, these tutorials are only viewable when using Internet Explorer on a PC. They are not viewable on a Mac.
 - Online Support: This page lists frequently asked questions with complete answers provided.
 - Request Support: From this page you can “submit a ticket” (submit a request for help via a written online form) or participate in a live chat.
 - Call a toll-free number (1-866-350-4279) to talk directly with a Blackboard support person.
2. You may also click **Course Tools** at the bottom of the left navigation bar, and then click “Help” to access a “User Manual.” You can find answers to your Blackboard questions in this manual.
3. If the above sources don’t help you, contact your facilitator. Please give your facilitator as much information as possible: type of computer (PC or Mac), operating system, browser, version of browser, the exact place in the course where you have a problems (Workshop, Topic, Learning Activity), a brief description of what your problem is, and explanation about what you’ve already tried to do to remedy the problem.
4. Finally, if your facilitator is unable to help you, contact Leah Tucker in the PLS IT department. You may reach her by phone during business hours (Central Time) 800-862-7263 x 2003 or email ltucker@plsweb.com.

Q: How do I log into the course?

A: Follow these steps:

1. Open one of the recommended browsers (see technical requirements above).
2. Type in the URL: <http://pls.blackboard.com>.
3. Click "Login."
4. Enter the Username and Password you received in the email from PLS.
5. Click "Login."
6. Click on the course title.

Q: I am unable to access Blackboard. What do I do?

A: You must have cookies enabled in your Web browser in order to access the Blackboard Learning System. Please follow the instructions below to adjust your "cookies" settings.

To view or modify cookies settings in Internet Explorer, follow these steps:

1. On the top menu, click "Tools," then click "Internet Options."
2. Click on "Privacy Tab."
3. Click on "Advanced."
4. Then check the box for "Allow Session Cookies."
5. Click "OK" and Click "OK" again.

Q: My course is not showing up when I log in. What should I do?

A: You may log into Blackboard approximately one week before your course is available; however, the course you're taking won't appear in "Courses in which you are enrolled" until the start date of your course.

Q: I can't get into the course.

A: You may need to have your password reset. Contact your facilitator.

Q: How can I change my username and password in Blackboard?

A: You may change your password, but not your username. Log into Blackboard, click **Tools** and then click "Personal Information" to revise your information. Be sure to write down your new password.

Q: I can log into Blackboard from my school computer, but not from my home computer. What can I do?

A: Make sure your home computer meets the technical requirements and that your computer's security settings are accepting cookies and popups.

Q: How do I find out what version of the Windows Operating System I'm using?

A: Go to "My Computer," right-click the icon and click "Properties" from the drop-down menu. The dialog box will give you this information in the "General" tab.

Q: Can I use AOL to access PLS online courses?

A: No, Blackboard (the Learning Management System used by PLS) doesn't operate

properly when using AOL.

Q: How do I copy and paste into a discussion?

A: Follow the instructions below:

1. Open the Microsoft Word document that you wish to post into a discussion.
2. Place and click your cursor anywhere within the document once it is open, a blinking cursor should appear within your document.
3. Click on "Edit" on the top menu of Microsoft Word and select "Select All" (OR simultaneously press "Ctrl" + "A" on your keyboard).
4. Click on "Edit" on the top menu again and select "Copy" (OR simultaneously press "Ctrl" + "C" on your keyboard).
5. Now, open a Web browser (i.e. Internet Explorer) and go to your course.
6. Click **Class Discussions** and enter a forum.
7. If you are adding a new post, click on "Add New Thread." If you are replying to a post that has already been made, open the post and click "Reply." Whether you are adding a new thread or replying to a post, the next window will look the same
8. Type a subject in the "Subject" field.
9. Place and click the cursor in the "Message" field, a blinking cursor should appear within the Message field.
10. Now, using the top menu in your browser window, click on "Edit" and select "Paste" (OR simultaneously press "Ctrl" + "V" on your keyboard).
11. This will paste the content from your Microsoft Word document into the "Message" field in the forum.
12. Press "Submit."

Q: When I copy and paste from a Word document into a class discussion, I get unusual symbols in my text. How do I get rid of these strange marks?

A: When you are in Microsoft Word:

1. Click "Tools."
2. Click "Auto Correct."
3. Click "Auto Format," and then un-check the various items under Replace, such as smart-quotes.

Q: How do I print a page of the course?

A: The instructions below are for individuals using Windows as their operating system.

1. Log into your course.
2. Go to the section of your course that has the document or text you wish to print.
3. From here you have two options:

Option 1:

- a. Place your cursor somewhere in the middle of the entire body of text that you wish to print.
- b. Right click on your mouse, and a menu will appear.
- c. Select the "Print" option.

Option 2:

- a. Open up a word processing program such as "Microsoft Word" or "Notepad > New Document."
- b. Place your cursor anywhere in the middle of the entire body of text that you wish to print.
- c. Simultaneously press "Ctrl" + "A" on your keyboard, which should select (highlight) all the text.
- d. Simultaneously press "Ctrl" + "C" on your keyboard, which should copy the selected (highlighted) text onto your "Virtual Clipboard."
- e. Go to the "New Document" of the previously opened word processing program ("Microsoft Word" or "Notepad").
- f. Place your cursor anywhere in the "New Document" and simultaneously press "Ctrl" + "V" on your keyboard, which should paste the text from your "Virtual Clipboard" into the "New Document."
- g. Click "File" in the top menu and select the "Print" option; or you can simultaneously press "Ctrl" + "P" on your keyboard, which will also print the entire "New Document".

Q: How do I find my grades?

A: You will only have access to grades after your facilitator has entered them. There are two ways to view your grades:

Option 1: When you are in your course:

1. Click "Course Tools."
2. Click "My Grades."

Option 2: From "My Homepage":

1. Click "View Grades" in the "Tools" menu.
2. Click the link for your course.

Q: I clicked on a link, but my computer says that it cannot find the file. What should I do?

A: There are three kinds of links:

- For a PDF: make sure you have Acrobat® Reader® installed.
- For a Word document: All Word documents are also posted as RTFs in the **Resources** section of the course. RTFs may be easier for you to open.
- For a Web site or an article on a Web site: Alert your facilitator to your difficulties. The Web site may have changed.

Q: What is the difference between an RTF and PDF?

A: RTF is an abbreviation for Rich Text Format. It is a type of Microsoft document file that most word processors are able to read and write. PDF is an abbreviation for Portable Document Format, which is a type of file opened by using Adobe® Reader™.

Q: Why don't the PDF links open for me?

Answer: Adobe® Acrobat® or Adobe® Reader™ is a plug-in that your browser uses to read PDFs. This plug-in is required to view any of the PDFs linked to in this course. Adobe® Reader™ is a free program to download. Go to

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html> to download Adobe® Reader™. Follow the instructions on the Adobe® Web site. Be sure you have a recent version.

Q: Some of the PDFs open for me, but some don't. What can I do?

A: Reload Adobe® Reader™.

Q: Why don't the RTFs open for me?

A: You may not have the appropriate operating system. PC users need to have Windows 2000 or XP, Mac users need to have OS 10.2 or 10.3.

Q: How do I install the CD-ROM for my course?

A: Go to Workshop One in your course, and review *Topic 1-D: Becoming Familiar with the CD-ROM*.

Q: My CD-ROM is not performing well. What should I do?

A: Review "When Problems Occur" in KEY INFORMATION for **Workshop One 1-D: Becoming Familiar with the CD-ROM**. If you still can't determine a resolution to your problem, contact Mary Eichen at ITM (the company that produced the CD): toll-free 866-463-6486 or mary@itm-info.com. She can troubleshoot most computer issues and help resolve your problem.