

Using Course Cartridges

Course cartridges add learning content to your course that has been made available by third-party vendors such as textbook publishers. PLEASE NOTE: The College has experienced extensive problems with vendor-provided cartridges! At least 60% of cartridges fail to install correctly, often costing instructors, students and support staff considerable time and frustration. Just as with textbook selections, the use of a course cartridge is an instructor or departmental decision. The instructor or department is responsible for:

- Deciding whether the cartridge content is of sufficient value to be incorporated into the course.
- Requesting the cartridge from the vendor (usually the textbook company).
- Receiving cartridge installation instructions.

Be aware that if you request a course cartridge this may entail an additional charge to your students. Student must pay this fee in order to receive an access key that allows them to view the cartridge contents in your course. This payment may also be included in the textbook cost.

Adding a course cartridge

The steps to install a cartridge are simple, but if the installation fails, it is difficult to remove the cartridge. Note that cartridges are installed on the Blackboard-hosted server and A-B Tech has no control over this process. To install a course cartridge, you must receive a message from the cartridge provider with instructions and with an instructor key (a series of letters and numbers). To install the cartridge you will:

1. Login your course as the Instructor and access the **Control Panel**.
2. Choose the **Import Course Cartridge** option under **Course Options**.
3. Input the provided **Instructor Key**.

The actual installation takes some time (often 24 hours or more) to complete. Cartridge installations often generate errors. A-B Tech staff can only report installation problems to Blackboard technical support staff. Responses usually take days. The most common outcome to errors is that the cartridge must be deleted and removed from the course.

Deleting a Course Cartridge

Unfortunately there is no easy way to delete a course cartridge once it has been installed, or if an error occurred during the installation process. The only solution is to create a temporary course, copy the

course content, except for the cartridge to the temporary course, delete the current course and recreate it as an empty shell (this will include the students enrollments), and copy the content back from the temporary course. This should usually be done by technical staff – let them know if you need this and expect a 24 hour turnaround to complete these operations (course creation cannot occur on weekends).