



Managing selective release

Step-by-step guide for designers and instructors

For Blackboard Vista 4.x

Designers and instructors have two ways to control access to online course components:

- By controlling visibility of links on a page; and
- By controlling release of components to a screen/page according to selected criteria.

Through these controls, you choose to display only those components relevant to the user at that time or place in the course.

This guide largely deals with the selective release of components, which is managed through the **Selective Release Map**. However, it does also cover the simple task of controlling visibility (i.e. hiding/showing items), which can be done either through the **Selective Release Map**, or directly on the page.

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Why use selective release?

The selective release facility allows both the designer and instructor to control the release of components to students. Criteria for releasing components can be set based on:

- **Date/time** – items are released only when they are relevant and needed
- **Selected students** – allowing you to customize delivery for individual students
- **Student learning groups** – allowing you to release resources, tasks and the like to project or discussion groups
- **Performance on a task registered in the Grade Book** – allowing you to set ‘hurdle’ requirements for access to further course components (e.g. particular learning module, assignment).

Controlling availability through visibility & release criteria

For a component to be available (i.e. accessible) to students, it must firstly meet any selective criteria placed on its release and, secondly, be visible as a link on-screen.

- **Selective release** can be based on date and time, selected students, student learning groups, or values in the Grade Book. Until the criteria are met, the component will not be visible or accessible to the intended group of students
- **Visibility (Show Item/Hide Item)** controls whether a link from the home page, or within a folder or learning module can be seen. A designer can make something they are working on hidden, until it is ready for the instructor or students.
- Links to components can be hidden from view through either the Selective Release Map, or via the *ActionLinks*  icon associated with the component’s title.

Setting visibility and release criteria

Selective release map

The **Selective Release Map** controls both visibility and release of all components in a MyLO course. Access to the **Selective Release Map** is under the **Build** tab in the **Designer Tools** menu, and under the **Teach** tab, via the **Instructor Tools** menu.

The **Selective Release Map** can be viewed by either **Course Content** or **Members** tab:

- The **Course Content** view shows each component in the course with its visibility, and any release criteria.
- The **Members** view shows initially the members of the course, their role and the groups to which they belong. By clicking an individual's User ID the course components available to that person are listed.

Changing visibility

1. Click on the **Course Content** tab to reveal all the linked course components. (**Note:** Items not yet linked to either the home page, folder, or learning module will not appear in the listing.)
2. Click on the *Expand* \oplus icon to fully reveal the components of a folder or learning module. (It will change to \ominus) – see figure next page.

Your location: **Selective Release**

Course Content **Members**

To make folders and links available to users, the following must be satisfied:
 1. The "Linked to" item must not be Hidden.
 2. The release criteria must be satisfied.

Title	Linked to	
Course Content Home		
– Welcome	Welcome	Hide Item
General information		Hide Item
– Unit outline	Unit outline	Hide Item
– Unit outline for printing (pdf 120K)	Unit outline for printing (pdf 120K)	Hide Item
– Teaching staff	Teaching staff	Hide Item
– SETI project (opens in new window)	SETI project (opens in new window)	Hide Item
\oplus Workshop module 1	Workshop Module 1	Hide Item
\oplus Workshop module 2	Workshop module 2	Hide Item
\oplus Workshop module 3	Workshop module 3	Hide Item
\oplus Workshop module 4	Workshop module 4	Show Item

Collapse & expand buttons


3. Click on the **Hide Item** or **Show Item** button for the course component concerned to control the link's visibility on-screen.

Setting release criteria


1. Display the relevant component, by expanding where necessary the contents of any folder or learning module (see figure above).
2. Under the table heading **Release Criteria**, and in the row of the item, click on **Set Release Criteria**. The following screen appears.

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3. Depending on the type of criteria to be constructed, click the Date, relevant button:
 - **Add Date Criteria** – set **Available Starting** and **Available Until** values using either by selecting **Immediately** or **Unlimited** or directly entering the information or selecting it from the pop-up calendar and clock menus.
Note: Make sure the appropriate radio button is also selected.
 - **Add Member Criteria** – Check boxes next to the members you wish to release the item to. [If you wish to exclude one or a number of students from receiving the component, select the **Does not equal** radio button and check the boxes for those students to be excluded].
 - **Add Group Criteria** – With the **Equals** radio button selected, choose those group(s) you wish to release the component to, by check the boxes. [To exclude a group from receiving the component, whilst other groups do, select the **Does not equal** radio button and check the box for the excluded group].
 - **Add Grade Book Criteria** – Use the drop-down lists to develop a criterion based on the values in one of the columns in the Grade Book. Enter a 'hurdle' value in the **Value** text entry box.
A designer can also use the **Add Grade Book Criteria** to release a course component to a particular role such as instructor, using the Role criterion in the drop down list.
4. Click **Save**.
5. Additional criteria can be added using the Date, Member, Group and Grade Book buttons as described above, to form more complex release criteria.

6. Use the drop-down list just to the left of the second ~~and~~ and subsequent criterion to select whether it is an additional criterion (select **And**), or an alternative criterion (select **Or**).
7. Under the **Move** column, use the  icons to reorganise the sequence of criteria.
8. Use **Indent** and **Outdent** to organise the level (bracketing) of criteria.
9. Use **Preview Expression** to see the criteria expression that has been constructed.

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10. To change or delete a criterion, click on the *ActionLinks*  icon next to the criterion and select **Edit** or **Delete**.
11. Press **Save** when the required expression has been constructed.

Changing release criteria

To modify selective release criteria that have been set for a course component:

- Open the **Selective Release Map**
- Locate the item/component and, under the Release Criteria column, click on the criterion to be changed.
- The **Set Release Criteria for: ...** screen appears; you can then make the changes as per the previous section.

References:

Designer and Instructor Reference: Application Pack 2 for Blackboard Learning System – Vista Enterprise License (Release 4) 2006 Blackboard Inc

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