Instructor Guide

BlazeVIEW HTML and Widgets Template – NCE

CENTER *for* eLEARNING

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

10/20/2025

Table of Contents

Overview

The **BlazeVIEW HTML and Widgets Template** is designed with specific elements to enable best practices for online teaching and in turn, student success. The template includes dynamic components that you can customize to engage learners in your course. These components include:

Course homepage layout options

Choose from seven layout options to greet students upon entering your course, some of which feature widgets that help improve engagement.

1. The Welcome widget can be personalized with a greeting, course-specific instructions, and term-long reminders.

2. The Visual Table of Contents widget allows students to track their completion and quickly pick up where they left off in any module.

3. The Slim Announcements widget provides previews of the course announcements you make, so fewer announcements are overlooked.

Start Here module with a VSU Syllabus.

The HTML Syllabus page contains placeholders and policy information in a single location for transparent information regarding grading, pacing, and policies. NOTE: The Syllabus page must be revised each semester to reflect updates and policy changes.

Sample module + seven additional placeholder modules

The sample module, Module 1, includes template pages for a Module Overview, Learning Materials, and a Video Lecture along with placeholders for a quiz, assignment, and discussion. Module 1 models best practices for **linear course design** by allowing students to navigate through

- an introduction to the content and objectives

- the instructional materials they need to engage with and understand

- activities and assessments that measure their mastery of the objectives.

BlazeVIEW Student Guide Module

The BlazeVIEW Student Guide module contains links to videos and instructions for students to use BlazeVIEW and its embedded tools. Students can reference how to update their settings, submit assignments and quizzes, view grades, and communicate with you and their peers.
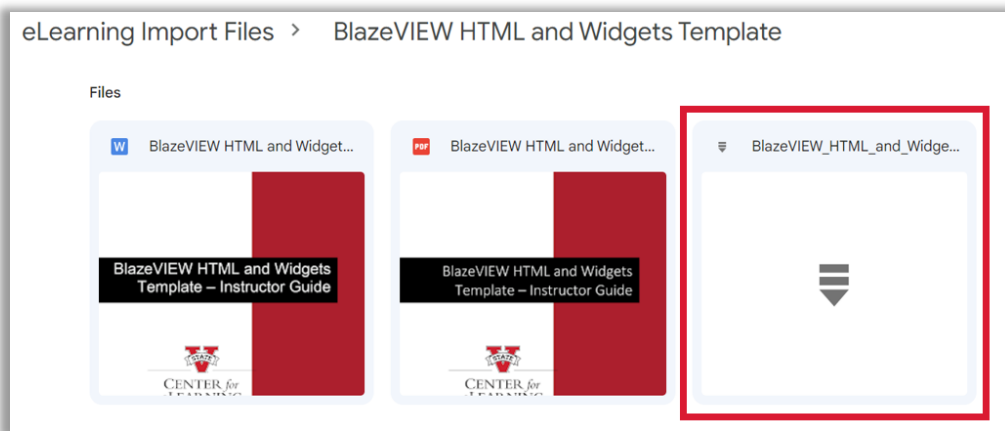
BlazeVIEW HTML and Widgets Template

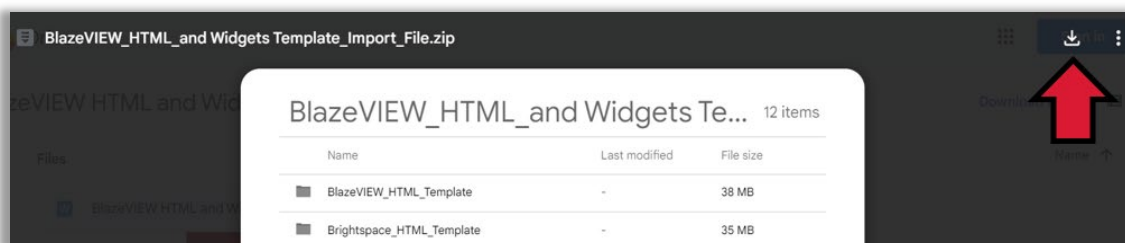## Downloading the BlazeVIEW HTML and Widgets Template

1. Open the eLearning Import Files Google Drive folder.

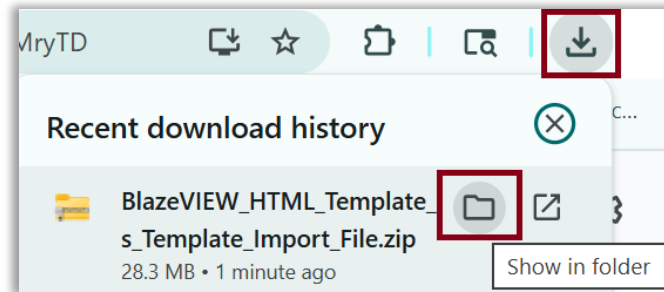2. Click the BlazeVIEW HTML and Widgets Template folder to open it.
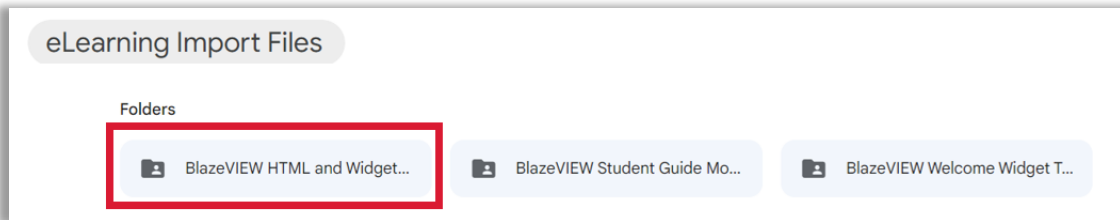
3. Select the BlazeVIEW_HTML_and_Widgets_Template_Import_File.zip file.
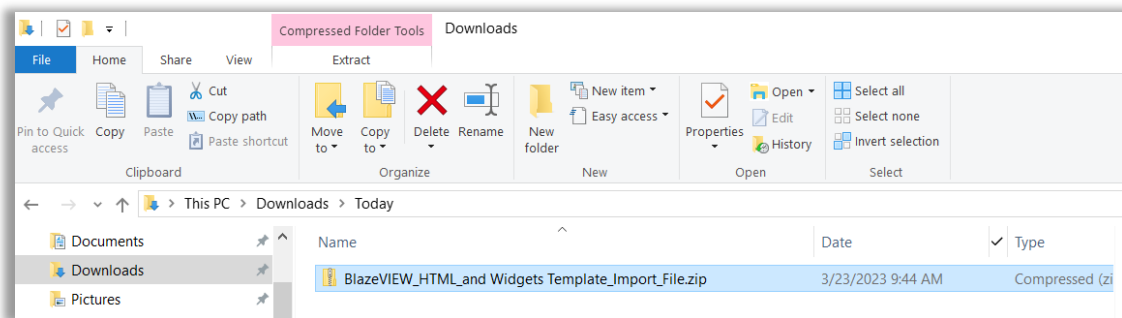

4. When the link opens, select the **Download** icon to download the file to your computer.

5. After the file downloads, click on the **Download** arrow and select **Show in Folder**.


6. The **BlazeVIEW HTML and Widgets Template Import** compressed (zipped) file should download into your Downloads folder so that you can import it into your course(s).

Importing the File into Your Course

Note: We recommend importing the **BlazeVIEW HTML and Widgets Template** into an empty course shell.

1. Navigate to the course you plan to import the **BlazeVIEW HTML and Widgets Template**.

2. Click the Admin Tools icon on the Minibar and select **Import/Export/Copy Components**.
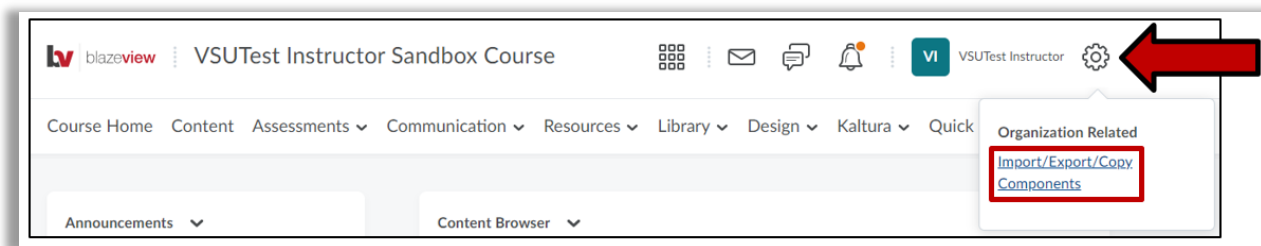
3. Select Import Components, then click Start.

4. Click the **Upload** button and browse to upload the **BlazeVIEW HTML and Widgets Template** file you downloaded earlier, then click the **Import All Components** button.

5. When the import is complete, click on the **View Content** button to navigate your course's Content section.
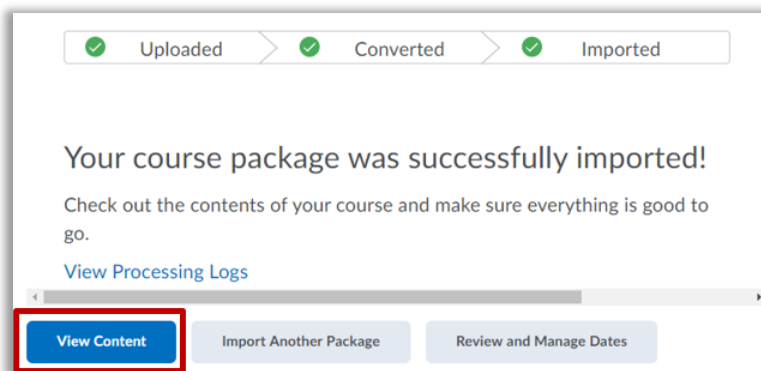
Course Homepage Customization

After the import is complete, choose your desired course homepage layout.

The course homepage is the first thing students see when they enter your course. Selecting a homepage layout that suits your course, your teaching style, and your students' needs ensures success for all.

Important Note: To take full advantage of the options available in the BlazeVIEW HTML and Widgets Template, select **Course Homepage Option 4** or **Course Homepage Option 7**.

Accessing the Homepage Selector

1. Enter the course of which you wish to change the homepage.

2. From the NavBar, select **Design > Course Admin**.
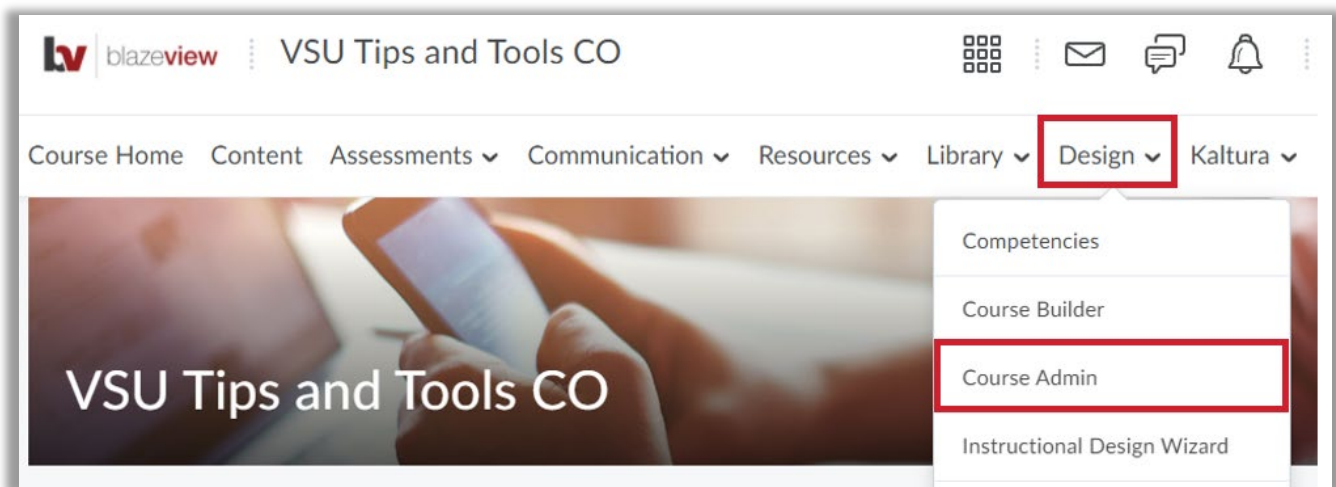
3. Under the first area, Site Setup, select **Homepages**.
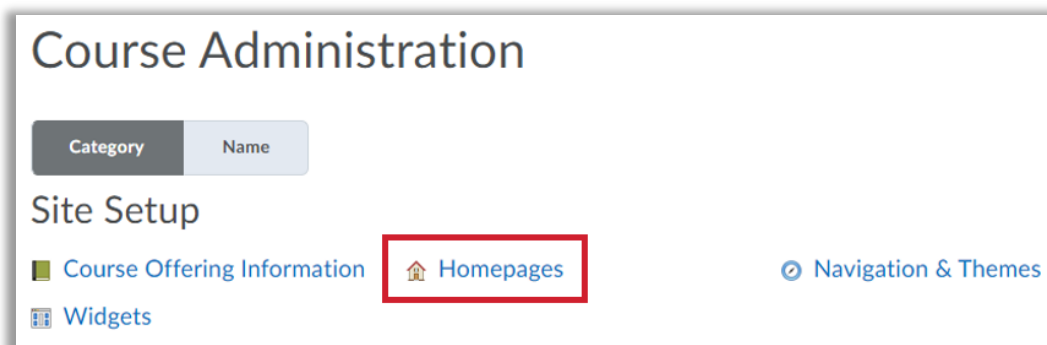
4. You will see a list of available course homepage options, with previews and descriptions. Your current active homepage will be indicated with a checkmark and the word "Active" on the right side of the row.

Course Homepage Option 1 ⌄   Default Homepage: Not Enforced

Updated default with the Role Switch widget, and the Work To Do widget replaces the Updates widget. Will become the default homepage beginning Spring 2022.
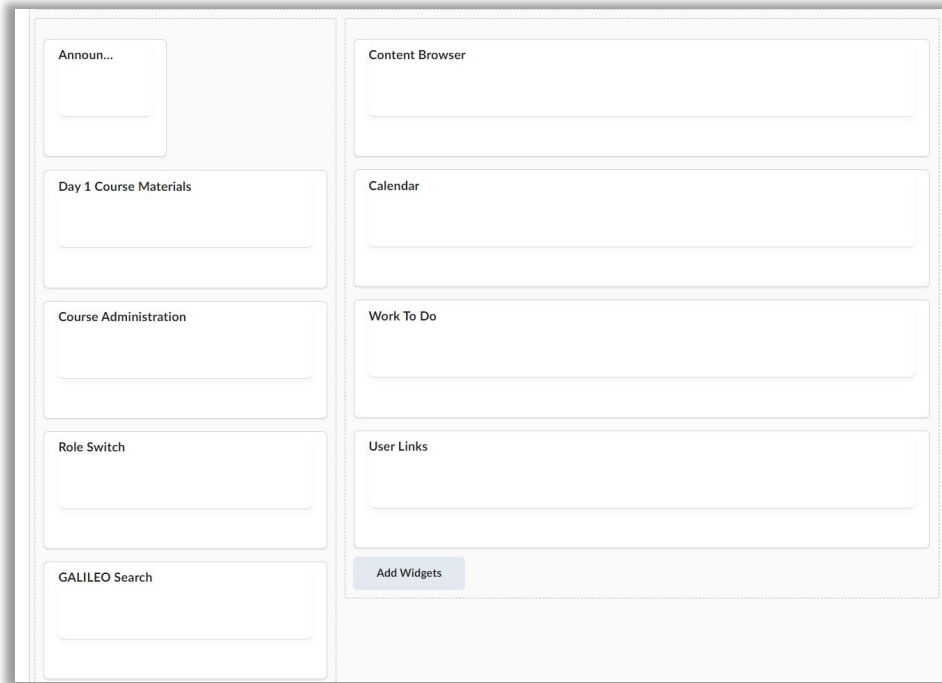
Shared

Course Homepage Option 2 ⌄

Two equal columns featuring new Slim Announcements widget, Calendar, Work To Do, Content Browser, Role Switch, and Course Administration widgets.

Shared and used in 12 other org units.

Course Homepage Option 3 ⌄

Two equal columns featuring 2 new widgets (Slim Announcements and Visual Table of Contents) Calendar, Work To Do, Day 1, Galileo Search, Role Switch and Course Administration widgets.

Shared and used in 57 other org units.

Course Homepage Option 4 ⌄

Two equal columns featuring 3 new widgets (Welcome Widget, Slim Announcements and Visual Table of Contents) Calendar, Work To Do, Day 1, Galileo Search, Role Switch and Course Administration widgets.

Shared and used in 71 other org units.

Course Homepage Option 5 ⌄

One wide and one narrow column featuring 2 new widgets (Slim Announcements and Visual Table of Contents), Calendar, Work To Do, Course Administration, Role Switch, and Galileo widgets.

Shared and used in 213 other org units.

Course Homepage Option 6 ⌄

Two equal columns featuring new Visual Table of Contents widget, Announcements, Calendar, Work To Do, Galileo Search, Role Switch and Course Administration widgets.

Shared and used in 17 other org units.

Course Homepage Option 7 ⌄

Two equal columns featuring 3 new widgets (Slim Announcements, Welcome and Visual Table of Contents) Calendar, Work To Do, Galileo Search, Role Switch and Course Administration widgets. No Day 1 Widget.

Shared and used in 10 other org units.

Course Homepage Options

When selecting a course homepage, decide whether or not you wish to set up available widgets. The **Welcome Widget** and the **Visual Table of Contents Widget** require some setup to be attractive and effective for your course.
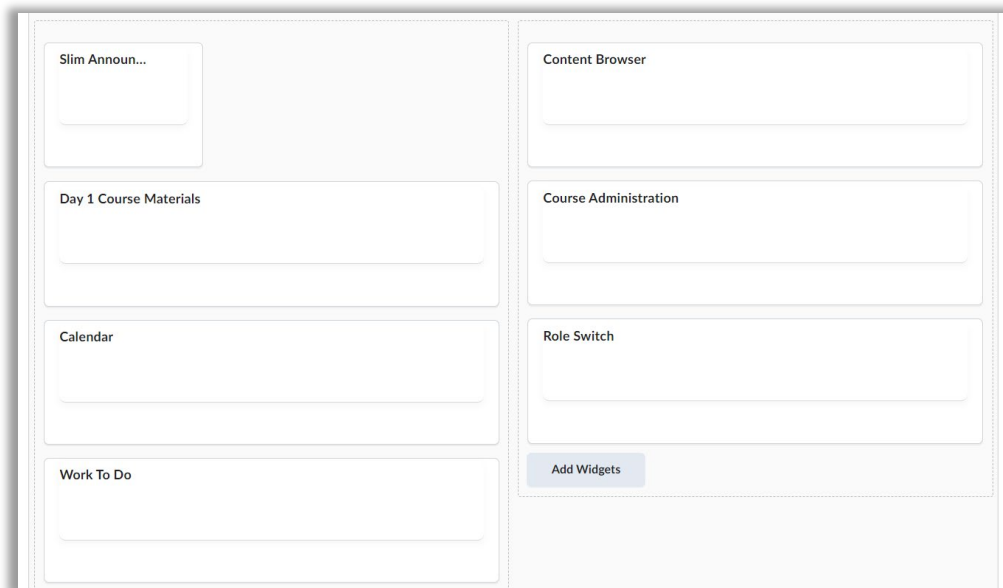
Course Homepage Option 1

Two equal columns featuring Announcements, Day 1, Course Administration, Role Switch, GALILEO Search, Content Browser, Calendar, Work To Do, and User Links.
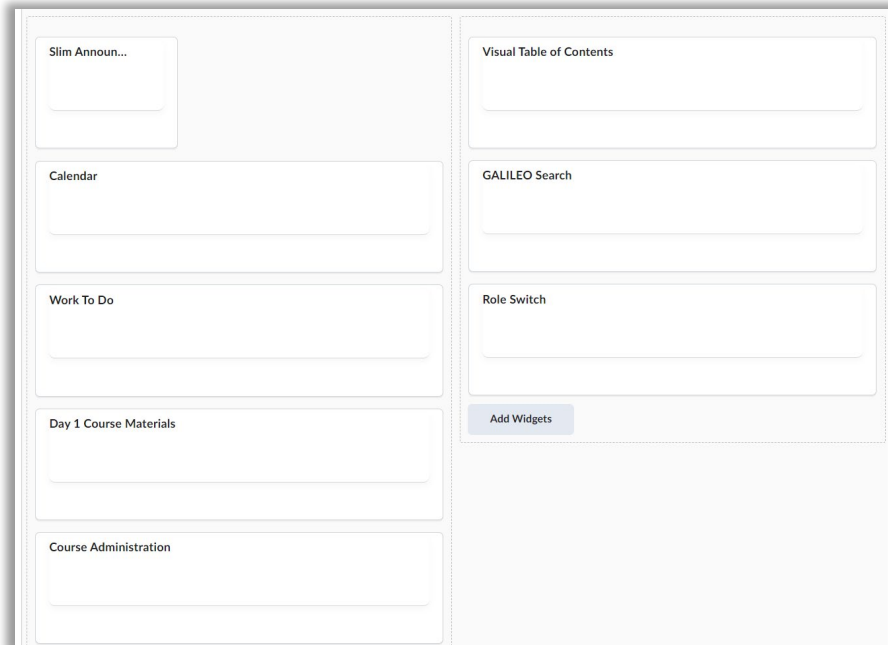

Course Homepage Option 2

Two equal columns featuring Slim Announcements, Day 1, Calendar, Work To Do, Content Browser, Role Switch, and Course Administration widgets.

Course Homepage Option 3

Two equal columns featuring Slim Announcements, Visual Table of Contents, Calendar, Work To Do, Day 1, Galileo Search, Role Switch and Course Administration widgets.

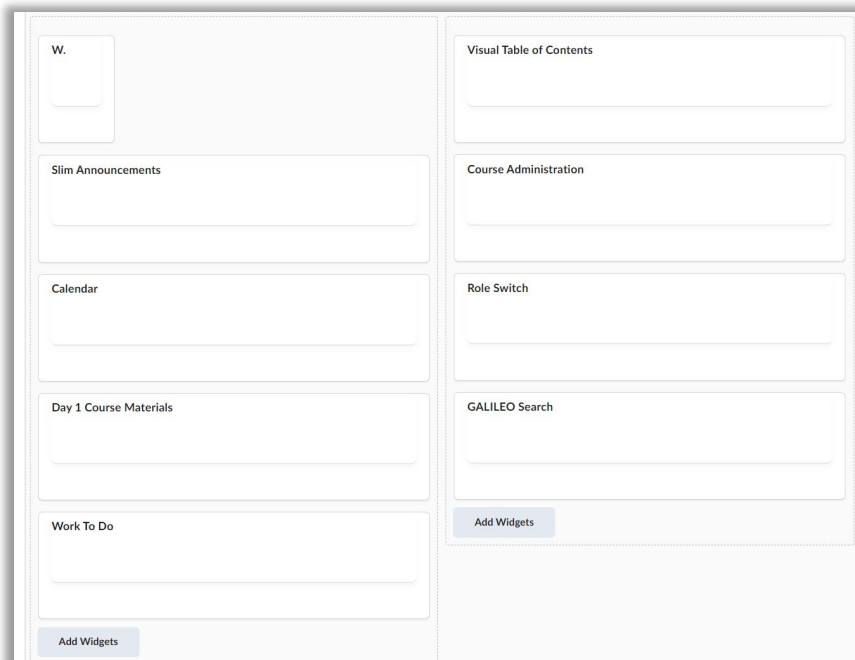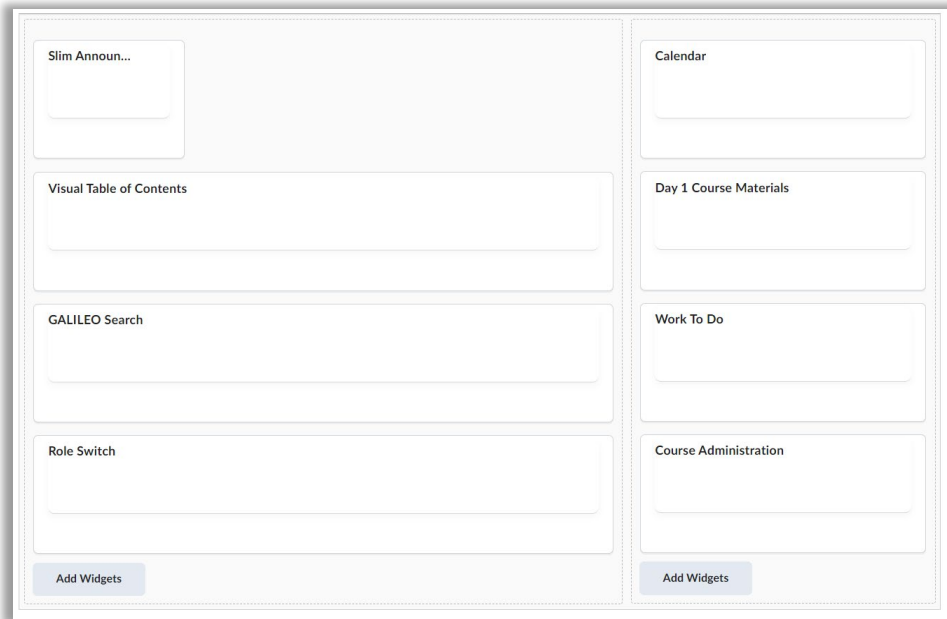## Course Homepage Option 4 (Recommended Option)

Two equal columns featuring the Welcome Widget, Slim Announcements, Visual Table of Contents, Calendar, Work To Do, Day 1, Galileo Search, Role Switch and Course Administration widgets.

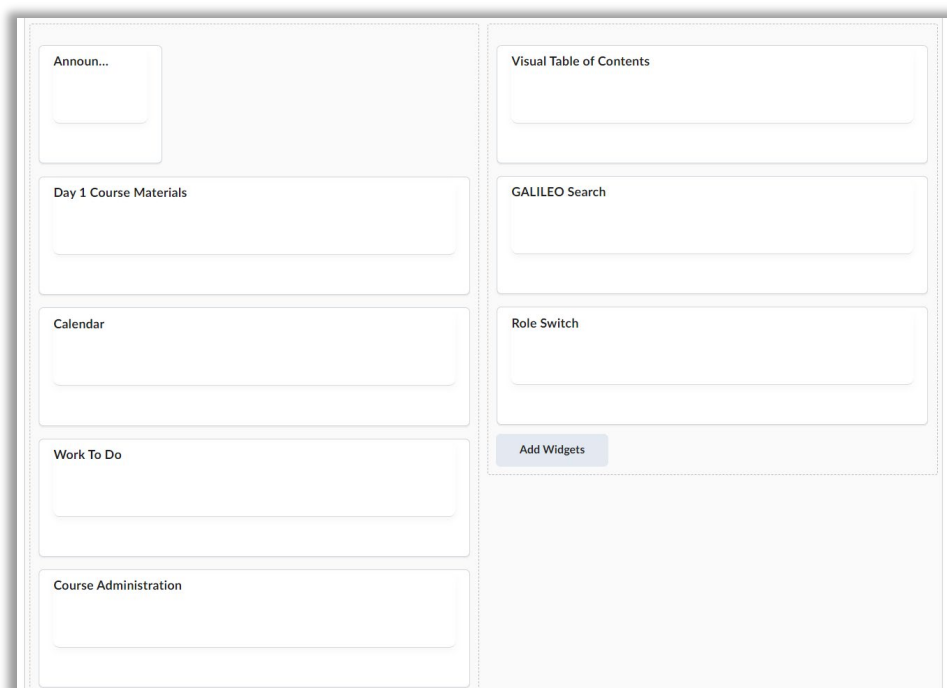## Course Homepage Option 5

One wide and one narrow column featuring Slim Announcements and Visual Table of Contents, Calendar, Work To Do, Course Administration, Role Switch, and Galileo widgets.
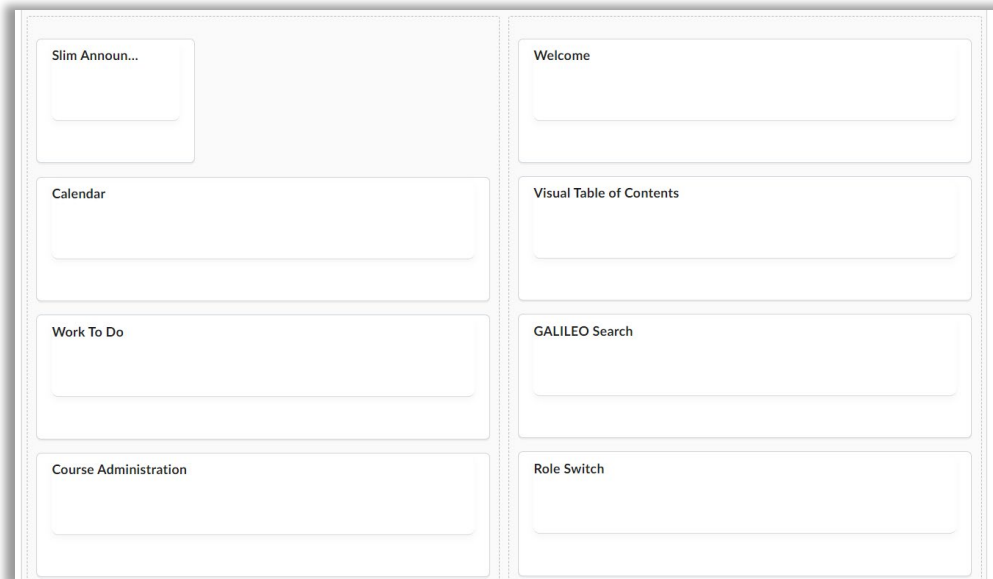

Course Homepage Option 6

Two equal columns featuring the Visual Table of Contents widget, Announcements, Day 1, Calendar, Work To Do, Galileo Search, Role Switch and Course Administration widgets.

Course Homepage Option 7 (Recommended Option)

One wide and one narrow column featuring Slim Announcements, Welcome, and Visual Table of Contents, Calendar, Work To Do, Course Administration, Role Switch, and Galileo widgets. **There is no Day 1 Widget present in this option. Do not use this option if you have adopted Day 1 textbooks or courseware.**

Selecting a Course Homepage

To change your course homepage, use the dropdown selector at the top of the page. Select from the available options, then click **Apply**.
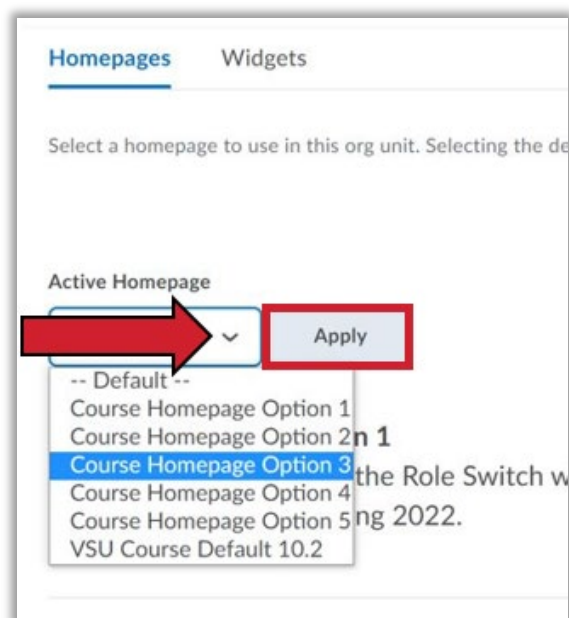
Things to Note

Best Practice: If you choose to change your course homepage layout after a course has started, post an announcement notifying students of the change.

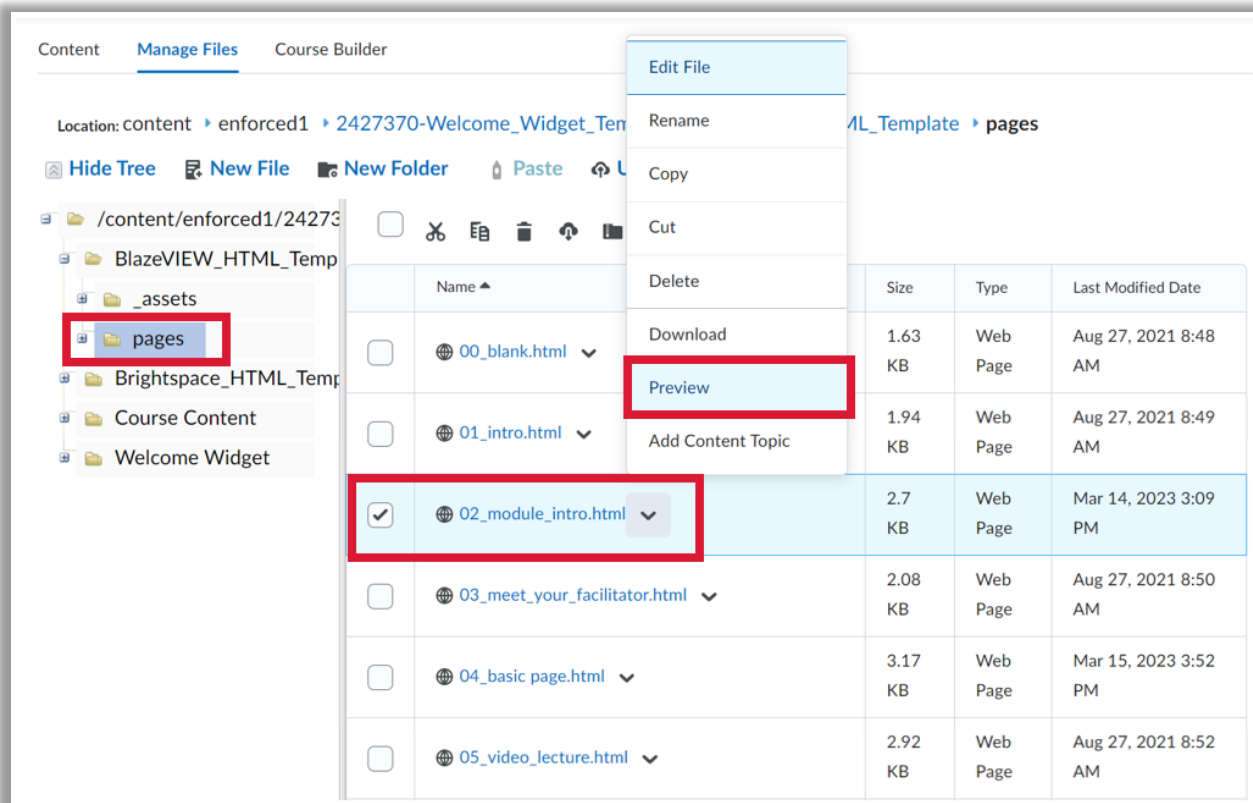**Reminder:** When selecting a course homepage, decide whether or not you wish to set up available widgets. The Welcome Widget and the Visual Table of Contents Widget require some setup to be attractive and effective for your course. If you do not intend to set up these widgets, select a course homepage option that does **not** include them.

Note: The Slim Announcements Widget will **not** display a video. You may still place a video within an announcement, but please use text within the announcement to indicate to students that they should click the announcement title to view the full contents.

Working with Template Pages

The BlazeVIEW HTML Template comes with several purpose-driven page types, such as Course Introduction, Module Introduction, Meet Your Facilitator, Basic page, Video Lecture, and Conclusion pages. Use the **Preview** feature to view each page in the **Manage Files "pages" folder**.

The following HTML template pages are included in the BlazeVIEW HTML and Widgets Template:

1. The **Blank (00_blank)** page is an empty page with a banner image

2. The **Course Introduction (01_intro)** page features a full-screen image for visual impact, and a clean area for course description.

3. The **Module Introduction (02_module_intro)** page features a prominent banner image across the top and a numbered list can be used to list a module's learning objectives. This makes it ideal as the first page of a module in a course.

4. The **Meet Your Facilitator (03_meet_your_facilitator)** page can serve as a dedicated space to present facilitator's expertise, experience and personality.

5. The **Basic (04_basic _page)** page is a general-purpose layout.

6. The **Video Lecture (05_video_lecture)** page is a great way to present video content, while accompanying it with supporting context, explanations and activities.

7. The **Conclusion (06_conclusion)** page makes an excellent page to conclude each module. Using a consistent layout for conclusions will help signal to course participants that they have reached the end some portion of the course content.

8. The **Elements (07_elements)** page includes samples of some commonly used page elements which you can copy to other pages.

9. The **Image (08_images)** editing page illustrates the different ways images can be used.

10. The **Accordion (09_acordions)** page includes samples of interactive accordions which you can copy to other pages.

11. The **Tab (10_tabs)** page includes samples of interactive tabs which you can copy to other pages.

Creating a New Content Topic from a Template

The aforementioned HTML page templates are available to use when you create new HTML pages.

1. In a module, click **Create New**.
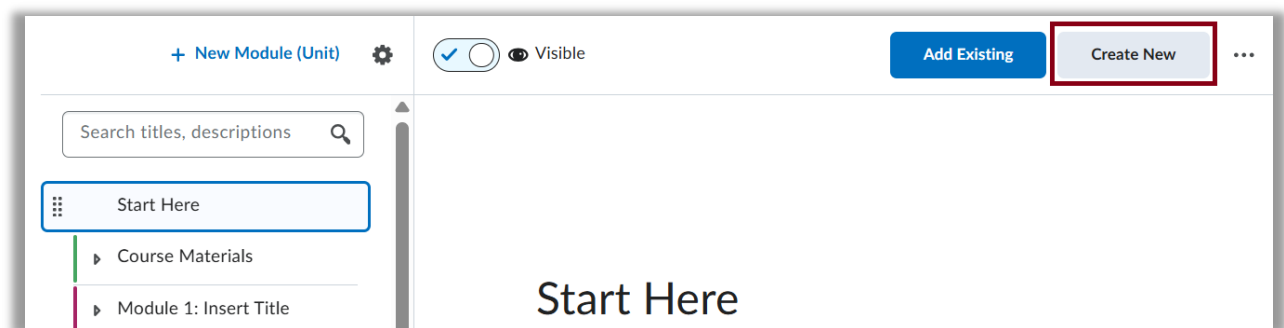
2. Select **Page**.
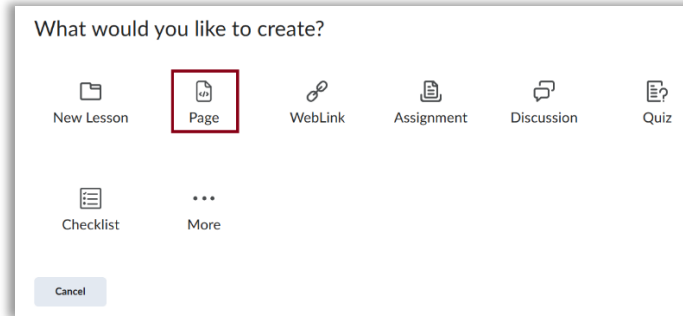
3. Enter a **name** for the page. Next, click **Select Template** for a list of template options. From the list, choose **Browse for a Template** to access the VSU branded template options.
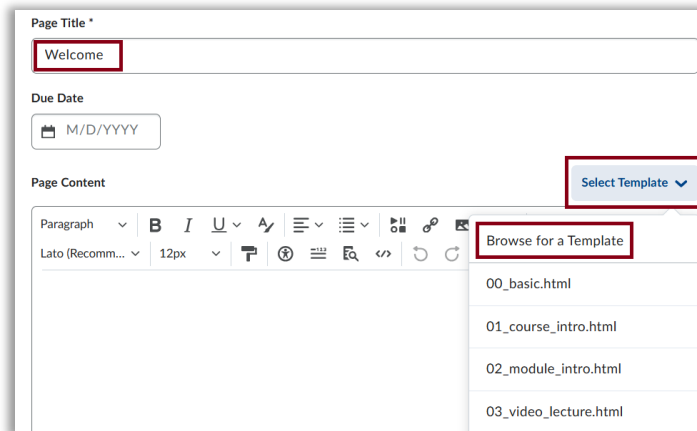
4. From Add a File, select **Course Offering Files**.
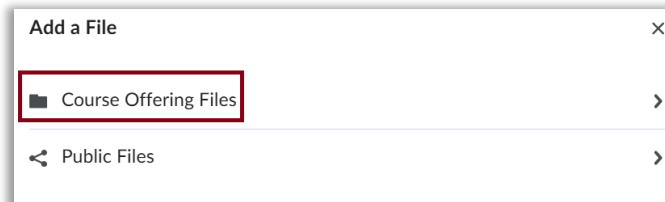
5. then open the **BlazeVIEW_HTML_Template** folder.
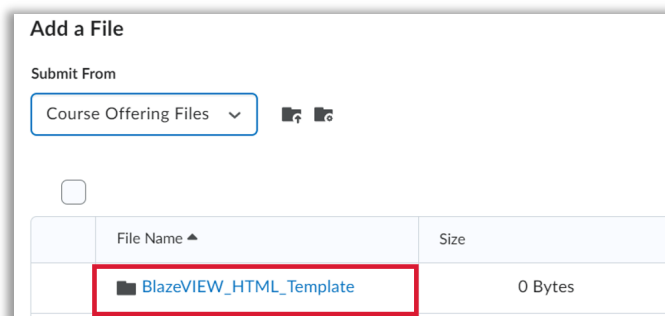
6. Select the **pages** folder.
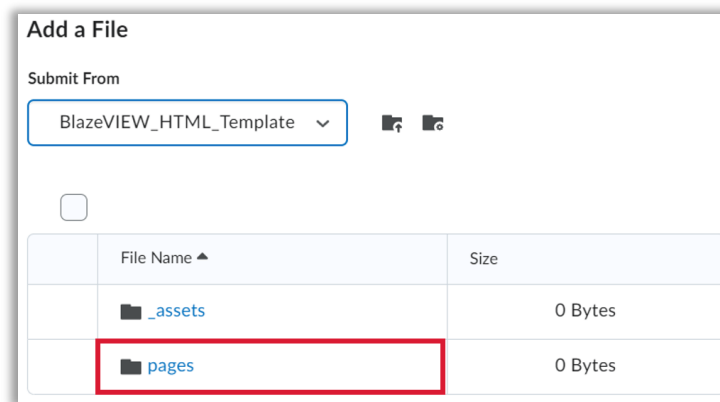
7. Select the **checkbox** next to the template layout you want to insert into the file and click **Add**.
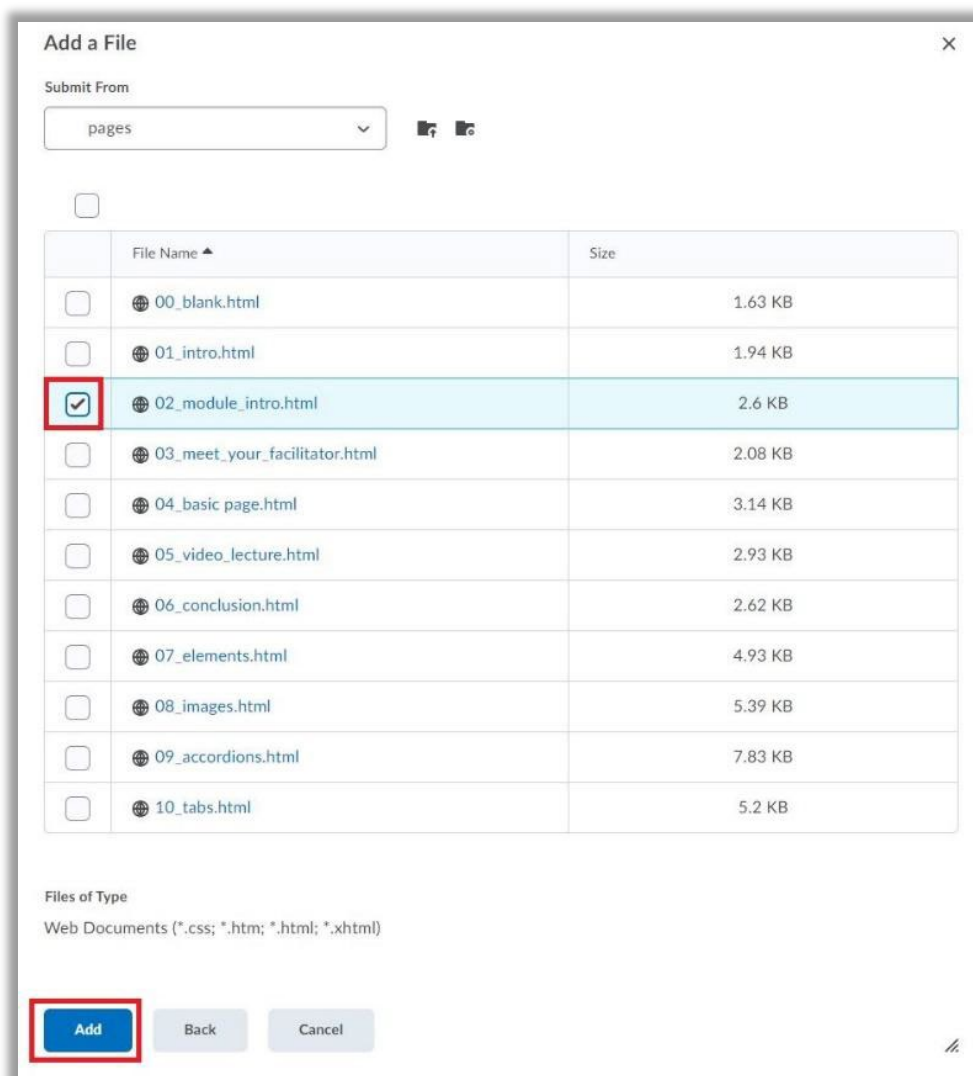
8. Edit the text, images, etc. using the content editor toolbars. See the section [Editing Template Pages](#) for more information about editing HTML pages. Click **Save and Close**.

Note: Applying the template to an existing page will overwrite the content and you will lose your work. Click **Cancel** to discard the changes.

Editing Template Pages

You can use the HTML editor to make quick and easy changes without needing any prior knowledge of HTML/CSS. Select the **Options** button and click **Edit** to open the editor.

Enter your content and use the available controls to apply formatting to your text. Detailed instructions for editing content are included on each template page.

Copying Text

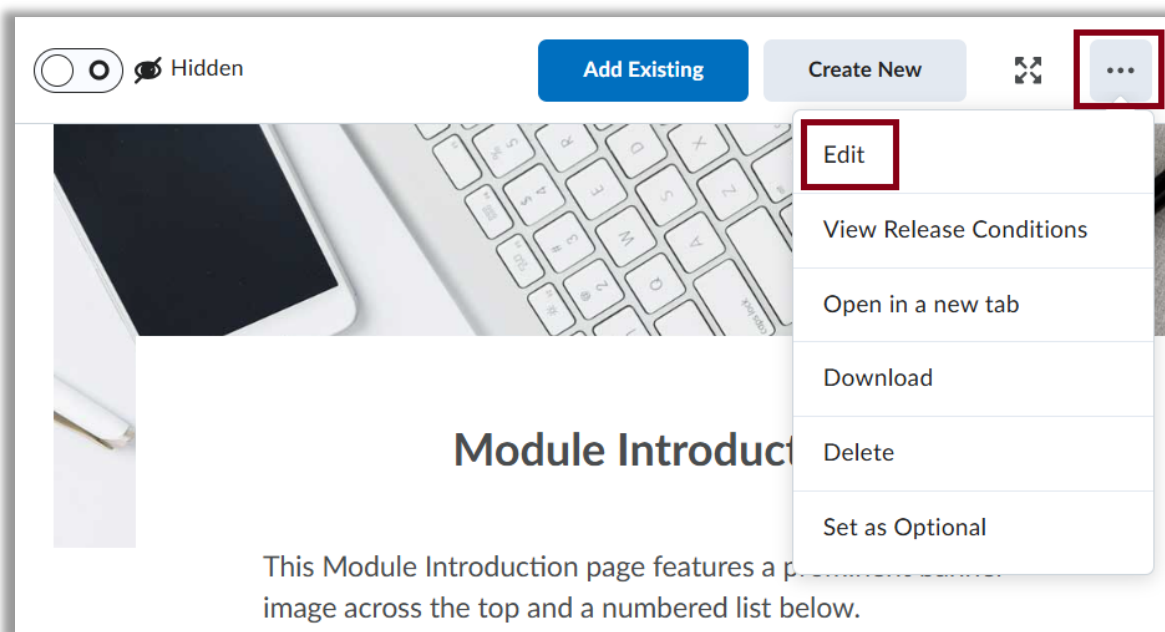When writing content, it is a great practice to first write content in a document, such as Microsoft Word. It allows stakeholders to easily collaborate and track changes to content. It also allows you to spot spelling and grammar errors early on.

When pasting text from a Word document into the HTML editor, however, some of the document's text styling will copy over. This will clash with the styles that are carefully crafted for this template. You can use Ctrl+Shift+V (Cmd+Shift+V on Mac) OR right-click to paste copied text as unformatted text to HTML editor.

Selecting a Heading Structure

When adding content to pages, it is important to pay attention to its heading structure. Proper heading structure is especially important for learners with disabilities, as assistive technologies (like screen readers) rely on headings for navigation.

The HTML Editor provides format options for six heading levels, paragraph style, and a few additional options. To create a heading, select your text, and choose the appropriate heading format from the Format list.

Editing Images

Images can be added to any of your pages to create visual interest and help break up text-heavy courses.

Inline image editing: the HTML editor has advanced image editing features, including resizing, flipping, rotating, and adjusting brightness, sharpness and color.

The HTML editor also provides Align Left, Align Right and Align Full functions to place an image in particular location.

Note: Follow copyright and fair use guidelines to insert images with a Creative Commons license. For more information, check out the [Creative Commons license guidelines](#).

Finding Creative Commons Images

There are a number of royalty-free and/or creative commons licensed images you can use for your BlazeVIEW course. Images will need light editing to change their dimensions to match the 754 pixels wide by 400 pixels high (or larger) size recommended.

Check out some of the websites below:

- [Creative Commons (CC) Search](#)
- [Google Image Search](#) (images, tools, and usage rights)
- [Carleton Library Site](#)

Public Domain and CC0 License Photo Sites

A number of free, stock images are available for use in your teaching and learning. Use a search engine to find royalty-free images, or visit the links below and search for images to use in your content. Be sure to follow the relevant use guidelines and specifications. If you have any questions about image copyright, please email blazeview@valdosta.edu.

- [pixabay.com](#)
- [pexels.com](#)
- [unsplash.com](#)
- [burst.shopify.com](#)
- [gratisography.com](#)
- [stocksnap.io](#)
- [publicdomainpictures.net](#)
- [metmuseum.org/art/collection](#)

Replacing Images

Several of the template files come with image placeholders. To replace the image:

1. Select **Edit** from the Options menu on the page where you want to change the image.
2. Once you can edit the topic, select the image and delete it. Do not move your cursor.
3. Click the **Insert Image** icon.
4. Select the source for your image.
5. Click the **Choose Destination** button to save it to the folder you want.

Replacing Videos

The Video Lecture page includes an embedded YouTube video, which can scale in any browser or mobile devices.

To replace the video:

1. Select **Edit** from the Options menu on the page where the video is located.
2. Delete the video and leave the cursor in place. To do so,
   a. click on the video and pause it
   b. carefully click the area preceding (left of) the video within the colored video container
   c. hit the Delete key.
3. Click the **Insert Stuff** icon.
4. Do one of the following:
   a. Select **YouTube** and search for the YouTube video; or
   b. Select **Enter Embed Code** and paste in the YouTube video embed code.
5. Click the **Insert** button.

Known issue: it is difficult to replace the video in certain browsers. If you are comfortable with HTML code, it is easier to search and replace the <iframe> code in the HTML Source Editor.

Welcome Widget

The Welcome Widget adds a window overlaid on your course homepage intended to welcome students to the course each time they log in and access the homepage, until they dismiss it. The Welcome Widget contains four pages, referred to as "steps," of information to promote student success in BlazeVIEW.

1. **Step 1: Course Introduction** – This page is intended for you to personalize with your course title, a welcome message, and any key reminders or information you would like students to refer to. See Setting Up the Welcome Widget on Page 24 for further instructions.
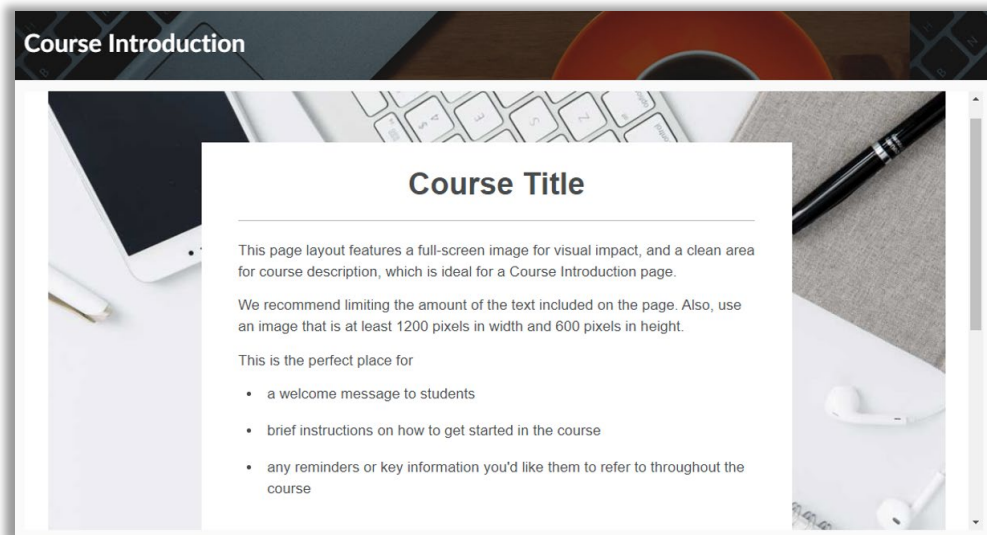
2. **Step 2: Navigating BlazeVIEW and this Widget** – This page contains an instructional video on navigating the Brightspace D2L Learning Environment (BlazeVIEW). Students will also learn how to dismiss and reopen the Welcome Widget, also referred to as the Quick Guide.
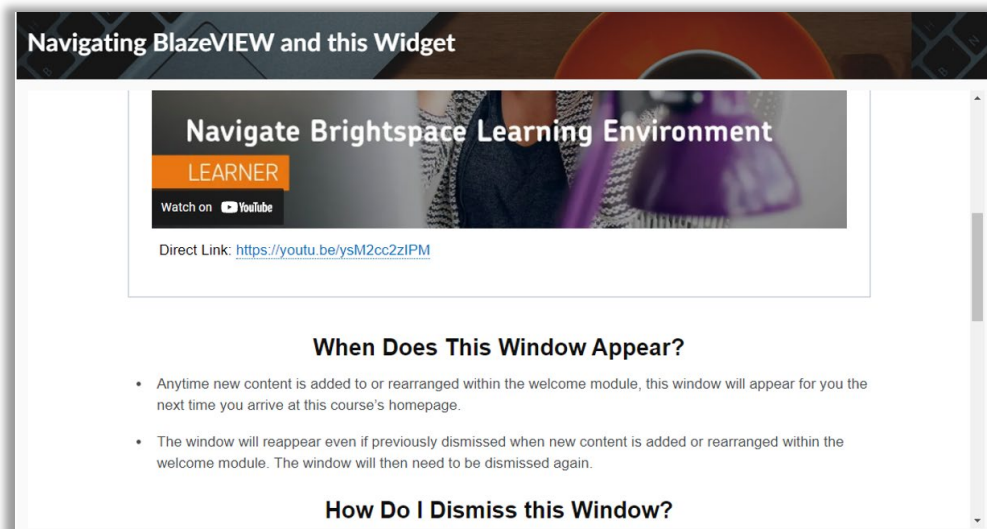
3. **Troubleshooting Common Issues** – This page contains a 5-part interactive accordion. When students click and expand the rows, they will find the solutions to common BlazeVIEW problems.

4. **Who to Contact for Help** – On this final page, students will find a table of contact information, categorized by help topic. This page is intended to provide students with next steps if troubleshooting does not work.

Setting Up the Welcome Widget

The Welcome Widget is automatically deployed in your course. To remove the Welcome Widget, you must select a course homepage option that does **not** include the Welcome Widget. See Course Homepage Customization on Page 8 for futher instructions.

Note: The Welcome Widget pulls content from a module using the name "Welcome." If any other module in your course contains the keyword "welcome" in the title, you must change it.

1. From the NavBar, select **Content**.
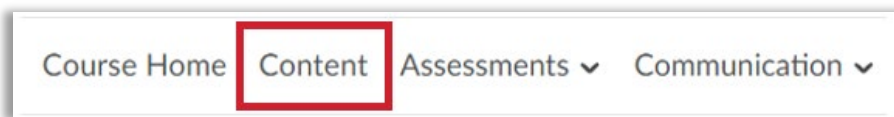
2. You will see the Welcome module in the navigation pane.
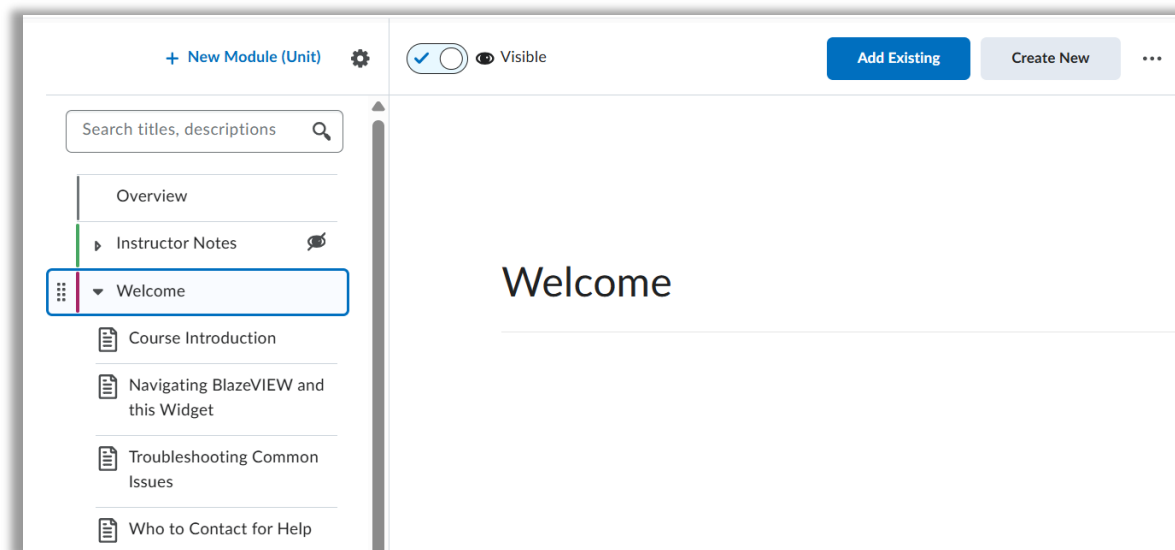
3. Personalize the Course Introduction page by selecting **Options,** then **Edit** from the menu.
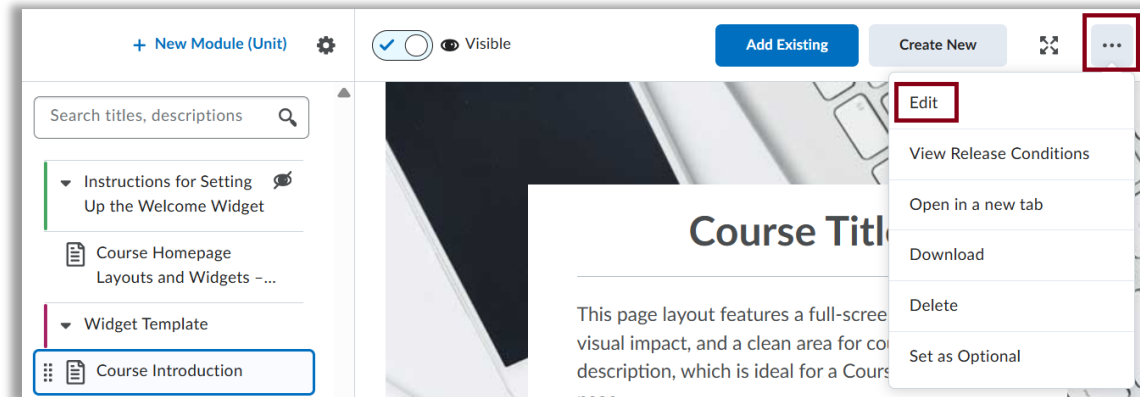
4. Edit the page content to include your course information and anything else you would like to incorporate. When you are finished, click **Save and Close**.

Visual Table of Contents

The custom Visual Table of Contents widget creates a tile for every module created in the course. A tile is automatically created for each Module in the course. The information in the tile is pulled from the Module description in the Content area and can contain a unique image for each module. Any text added to the module description can be pulled in as information about the module. The widget is also smart enough to know where a learner left off, so they can select t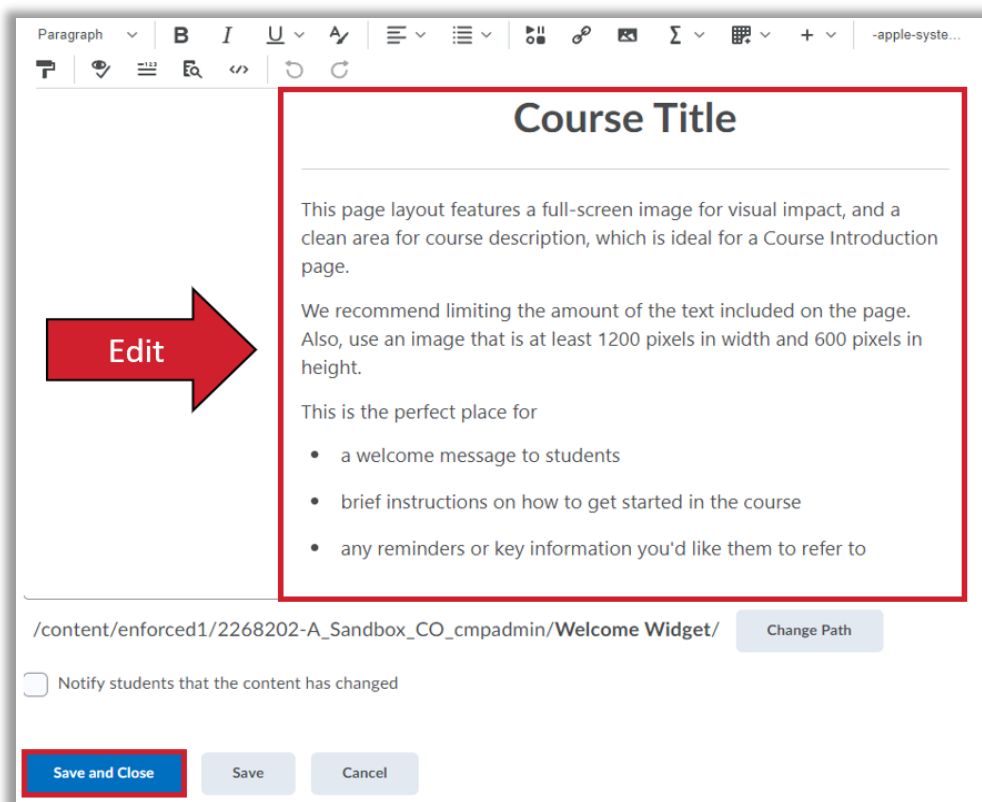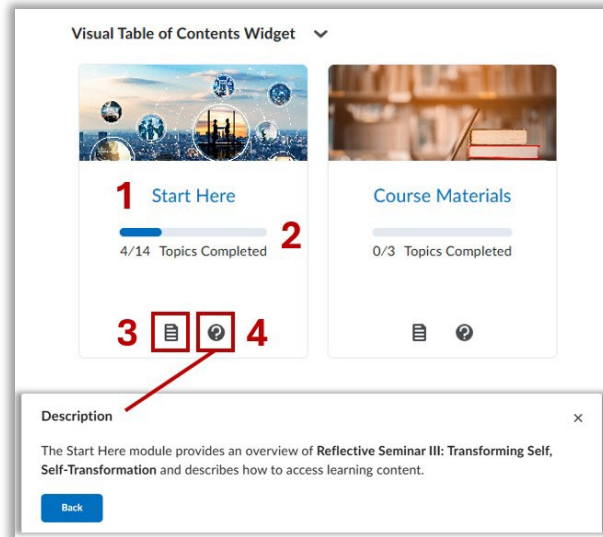he module title to get to the top level of the module or select the 'Next Topic' button to go to the next unread topic in that module.

Note: If you choose **not** to use the Visual Table of Contents, see [Course Homepage Customization](#) on Page 8 for instructions to select an option that instead contains the Content Browser.

When to Use the Visual Table of Contents Widget

The Visual Table of Contents widget is a great choice if…

…you have a content-driven course
When sharing content and activities is the primary goal of your course, the Visual Table of Contents adds a highly visual, simplified organization system right to your homepage.

…you have a traditional linear course structure
The layout of the Visual Table of Contents encourages continuous progression through a course, module by module, and topic by topic.

…you want to promote learner progress
The widget visualizes progress and launches learners into the first unvisited topic reinforcing the importance of completion.

Visual Table of Contents Best Practices

- Keep your module description short and to the point. Your module's description is automatically displayed using the "?" icon.

- Picture size matters. The image used in the module description should be 754 pixels wide by 400 pixels high (or larger) so it will correctly display in the widget. We recommend using a .jpg file type, but the widget supports .png, and .svg.

Adding a Module Description and Image for the Visual Table of Contents

1. From your BlazeVIEW course homepage, click **Content** in the course Navbar.

2. From the navigation pane, click on the module you want to edit.

3. From the **Options** menu, select **Edit**.

4. Use the HTML editor to add an image. Click the **Insert Image** button in the Editor toolbar and choose the image location.

   o If the image is on your computer, select **My Computer.** Choose the file from your computer and drag and drop it on the designated area, or click **Upload** to select the image from your computer. Then, click **Add**.

   o If the image is located on the web, select **URL**. Enter or paste the web address for the image, then click **Add**.

   o If the image is located within the course, select **Course Offering Files**. Choose the file from your course files, then click **Add**.

5. Once you click **Add**, the system will prompt you to add an alternative text for the image selected. To ensure that the image is accessible to all users, enter a short description of it in the Alternative Text field or check the 'This image is decorative' box if it is a decorative image.

   TIP: The alternative text should convey the message you want students to get when they look at the image. If the image refers to an intricate infographic that needs further explanation, enter a short description in the provided Alternative text field and add a more detailed description under or next to the image in the HTML textbox so all learners benefit from the explanation.

   WARNING: Only select '*This image is decorative'* if the image contains no information valuable to the student. You can always edit the image later and edit the alternative text.

6. Click **Save and Close**. The image is now saved in your module description and will be displayed in the Visual Table of Contents.

For more information or assistance, call 229-245-6490 or email blazeview@valdosta.edu.
For 24/7 BlazeVIEW or GoVIEW assistance, call 855-772-0423 or visit GeorgiaVIEW Help Center.