

Learn SaaS Release Notes - v3000.1.0

 *Looking for the latest release information? Check out the [Blackboard Learn SaaS release notes feed](#).*

- Continuous delivery release v3000.1.0 for all SaaS customers
- Test environments updated approximately April 4, 2016
- Production environments updated about two weeks later

This release contains several new features, including Group Assignments, Graded Discussions, Single Sign On (SSO) through SAML, and multimedia support for Assignments. It also contains a change to the system administrator options for course view settings and a server upgrade to Java 8. Finally, there are approximately 200 maintenance items; highlights are below.

[New features](#) | [Maintenance updates](#)

New features in the Ultra course view

Group assignments

Instructors: now you can create Group Assignments in Ultra Course View. Here are some tips about this new feature.

1. By default, groups are randomly assigned. The system gives you several default options of group sizes.
2. If a course is converted, groups in the Original Course View will convert to groups in the Ultra Course View.
3. By default, students in a group will receive the same grade. Instructors can choose to give students different grades if desired.
4. After logging in, students can see their group name and the members of their group. One student submits on behalf of the group and that is marked.

Graded discussions

Discussions strengthen students' ability to think critically, clearly express their thoughts, and communicate with peers. Now you can assess these abilities as part of each student's course grade in the Ultra Course View.

To make a discussion count for a grade, select **Discussion Settings** to open the settings panel. Under **Details & Info**, you can check the box for **Graded Discussion** and additional grade settings appear. Set a participation deadline and choose the preferred grade unit. You can also select the **Display on the course content page** option to have this discussion appear in the same list as the other course materials.

SSO through SAML 2.0

Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML) is an XML-based data format that can be used to authenticate and authorize users between separate systems. SAML is frequently used as a Single Sign-On (SSO) solution, including for Blackboard Learn. SAML focuses on improved security, improved end user experience, and easier IT administration.

The new SAML 2.0 Building Block simplifies configuration of SSO by allowing the institution to directly connect to SAML 2.0 Identity Providers for initial authentication. It can replace the need for Shibboleth authentication services. However, clients that prefer Shibboleth may continue to use it.

The SAML Building Block also supports just-in-time (JIT) provisioning of user account creation and course enrollments. This new capability will improve collaboration among institutions by facilitating access to shared courses, training, and other activities provided via Blackboard. The Building Block supports connections with any SAML 2.0-compliant IdP, including SSO using services such as Google Apps for Work, Google Apps for Education, Microsoft Azure, and Office365.

The Building Block is preinstalled in Learn SaaS deployments. After you activate the Building Block, a new authentication type appears in the **Create Provider** list on **Admin Panel > Authentication**, which allows you to configure the service.

Adding media to assignments

Media provide context for students to complete an assignment. Sometimes, instructors also use media as part of the prompt for an assignment.

Now, instructors have the ability to build Assignments that include inline media for students to review before beginning their submissions (or as the basis for the submission). These engaging pieces of content may be viewed or played with in the Assignment page without requiring students to download and open image or video files on their computer.

If your browser allows, media files you add to assignments display inline by default. If your browser can't display a media file inline, it appears as an attachment. Files you add from OneDrive behave in the same way.

Guest Speaker Prep

Assignment

Review this image before the guest speaker session. Download the "five_questions" doc and add your thoughts. Your response is required and graded.

Field	Men (%)	Women (%)
Medical Doctors	66%	34%
U.S. Congress	81%	19%
Executive Officers	85%	15%

Download: [five_questions.doc](#)

Ultra enablement

System administrators now have the ability to manage course view options at the course level, instead of system-wide, which allows more flexibility for instructors. After you enable the Ultra experience for your institution, you can determine the course view option. The setting only applies to newly created courses.

On the Admin panel, navigate to **Course Settings > Default Course Properties > Default Course View Option**. You will see three options:

- Original Course View (the system default)
- Ultra Course View
- Instructor Choice, which allows the Instructor to preview his course in both views and decide which he prefers to use

Java 8

Blackboard Learn on a SaaS deployment now runs on Java 8, the latest version of Java from Oracle. This change is on the server only and is unrelated to any Java you or your users may use on devices or browsers. Java 8 is the most currently supported version of Java, which means that Oracle is actively developing and maintaining the platform to ensure quality and security. For more information, view our [FAQs page on Java 8](#).

Highlighted maintenance updates

Name	Description
Accessibility	More than 20 bugs were fixed to improve screen reader experience, tab navigation, ensure alternative text exists for images and buttons, and ensure valid ARIA roles, states, and properties.
Assignments (Ultra Course View)	An assignment with a due date in the past could not be edited after its initial creation. Now the system allows instructors to edit an existing assignment without updating the due date to the present day or time.
Calendar (Ultra Course View)	In the Ultra course calendar, a course with a very long course name was not displaying correctly via proper vertical alignment.
Course Communication (Original Course View)	Attachments sent from Learn were not displayed correctly in the download section of emails in programs such as Microsoft Outlook or Mozilla Thunderbird.
Course Content (Ultra Course View)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilizing the drag-and-drop feature for items within the Course Content page rendered two “drop” zones, which created confusion. 2. When an instructor logged into an Ultra enabled-system and attempted to create a new external course via the Course Content page, she was unable to see the new course after refreshing her browser.
Content System (Original Course View)	Adding a Discussion topic to a course content area via the “Discover Content” option resulted in an error message upon submission.

Name	Description
Integration Framework	When pulling grades via the SIS Integration Framework, Grade Center column information was not populating correctly from columns created via the GUI and resulted in errors in the SIS logs. This only affected courses created prior to the 9.1 April 2014 release.
Localization (Original Course View)	We made 17 localization and translation improvements for Swedish, Spanish, Dutch, and Brazilian Portuguese.
Performance	We made performance enhancements on how the ActiveMQ logs and Bb-Services logs handle collection and improved overall app server stability.
Tests (Original Course View)	When tests were launched in a new window from within a Learning Module (or when using the Respondus Lockdown Browser), the test instructions were not displayed correctly.