

Overview of the Blackboard Learn™ 9.1 Q2 2018 and Q4 2018 releases

The latest releases for Blackboard Learn 9.1 (the Original experience for managed and self-hosted institutions) deliver many new features and enhancements that improve:



Engagement and efficiency



Assessment and grading



Standards and interoperability



Quality and maintenance



By upgrading from the Q4 2017 release to the Q4 2018 release of Learn, your institution will benefit from an environment that is easier and more effective to use, more engaging for students, and of greater quality – which means happier, more successful educators and students.

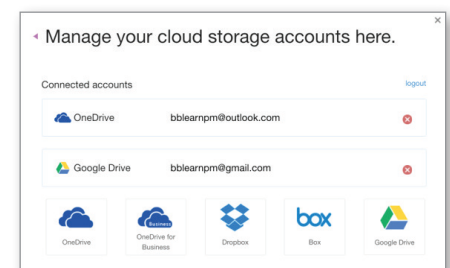
Engagement and efficiency

Record audio and video feedback for students (Q2 2018)–

Instructors and graders can increase student engagement by creating personalized audio or video feedback recordings by clicking on the microphone icon in the Content Editor. Students can easily access the recording without the need of a browser plug-in. This feedback functionality is supported within Assignments, Tests, graded Discussions, graded Wikis, graded Blogs, graded Journals, and manual grade columns. Recordings are stored in the cloud and do not utilize hosting storage allocation or local storage.

Cloud storage integration (Q4 2018*) –

Instructors can upload documents from their preferred cloud storage accounts – including OneDrive, Google Drive and Dropbox – directly into their course when authoring content items or creating assignments. Students can do the same when uploading assignments.



Greater responsiveness on mobile devices (Q2 2018) –

To continuously improve the mobile experience for instructors and students, Tests and the Learning Modules tool have been newly optimized for web browsers on mobile devices, when using the Learn 2016 theme. In the Learning Modules tool, the table of contents will always be pinned to the bottom of the page and can be expanded or collapsed. In Tests, additional question types have been optimized for mobile use.

Brand color configuration (Q2 2018) – To align more closely with your institution’s brand, options for brand configurations are now supported when using the Learn 2016 theme. This includes brand color configuration, system color palettes, and navigation settings such as tab placement and frame height.

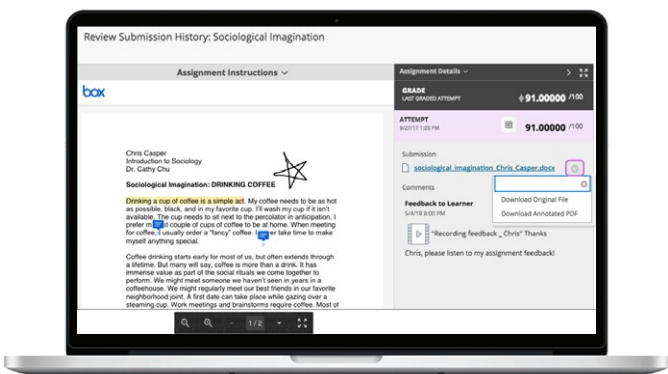
Course menu color support (Q2 2018) – Course colors can now be customized. Instructors and course designers can configure the course colors in the course control panel when using the Learn 2016 theme. The course menu will present in these colors in both desktop and mobile web browsers.

Enhanced accessibility (Q4 2018) - To make it easier for users of assistive technologies to navigate the structure of pages, skip links now work more consistently across Learn tool areas.

Nynorsk language support (Q4 2018) – Support for Nynorsk (written Norwegian) has been added.

Assessment & Grading

Download annotated PDFs (Q4 2018*) – A highly requested feature, instructors and students can now download annotated files for permanent record using in-line grading (aka New Box View). DOC, DOCX, or PDF files with annotations will download as an annotated PDF. Students can download the annotated file after their submission has been graded.



Grading in Blackboard Instructor App (Q4 2018*)

Instructors can now grade assignments in the Blackboard Instructor mobile app. They can review assignment submissions and attachments, provide comments and inline annotations, grade with rubrics, and publish grades to students – making this the easiest way to grade on the go.

Attendance tracking (Q2 2018) – Instructors can now easily track attendance. For each class meeting, instructors can mark whether a student is present, late, absent, or excused. The attendance records appear in a single column next to other grades in the gradebook. On the Attendance page, profile pictures appear so instructors can easily identify students.

Granting grade reconciliation using Delegated Grading (Q4 2018) – Instructors now have the authority to grant permission to any delegated graders within their course to reconcile (determine the final) grades; eliminating the need for system administrators to manage this task. When grading is delegated, the “Can reconcile grades” option appears. Granting grade reconciliation is now as simple as checking the box.

GRADER	SUBMISSIONS TO GRADE	VIEW SETTINGS	RECONCILE GRADES
Cathy Chu Instructor	None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can view other graders' scores, feedback, and notes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can reconcile grades
Monica Gonzales Teaching Assistant	Random Set 25	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can view other graders' scores, feedback, and notes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can reconcile grades
Tony Brown Grader	Random Set 25	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can view other graders' scores, feedback, and notes	<input type="checkbox"/> Can reconcile grades

Grade center enhancements (Q2 2018) – Instructors will now be able to view full titles of Grade Center columns making it easier to distinguish between similarly-titled items, when using the Learn 2016 theme. They can also view as many columns as the size of their window will allow and enter Grade Center full-screen mode to make the most of their desktop experience.

Additional attempts in anonymous grading (Q2 2018)

To better support anonymized assessment practice, instructors can now grant additional assignment attempts to students as needed while still maintaining the full anonymity of the process.

Clear multiple-choice selection (Q2 2018) – Students are now able to clear a selection from multiple-choice questions. This feature is beneficial when negative points are associated with incorrect answer choices.

Outcomes Assessment roles based on Institutional Hierarchy (Q4 2018) – To enable use beyond that of the centralized assessment office, the Outcomes Assessment solution has been enhanced to respect the access limitations you’ve put in place by configuring your Institutional Hierarchy. Outcomes roles can now be assigned to key stakeholders within each department; these users will be able to create their own evidence collections, manage evaluations, and view reports for courses within their node of the Institutional Hierarchy.

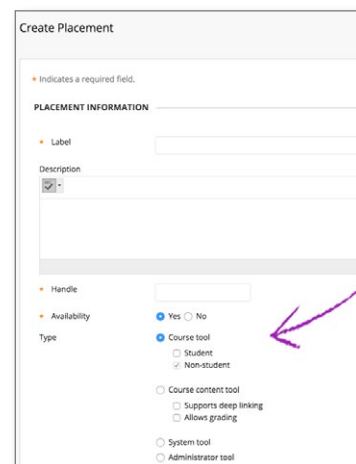
Standards and interoperability

We continue to support Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) by expanding the ways it can be leveraged within Blackboard Learn, offering you additional options for growing your EdTech platform. These enhancements ease the transition from Building Blocks to LTI and create an increasingly consistent user experience between the Original and Ultra experiences.

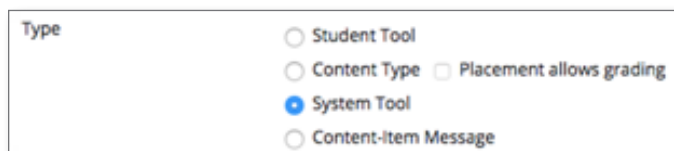
LTI enhancements (Q4 2018) – We’ve made several enhancements to the LTI Tool placement section of the provider setup:

- By selecting “Student” course tool, tools are placed in the “Student Tools” area of the course for immediate student use; no instructor action is required.
- The “Non-student” course tool type is for instructor- and course builder-tools only. Instructors can access these tools via their Control Panel and no longer need to incorporate them into their course.

- The new “System tool” placement type allows a tool to be added to the Tools menu on the My Institution or other module tab for tool access outside of the course context, such as a library system.
- The new “Administrator tool” placement type allows administrators to place LTI tools in the “Tools and Utilities” menu of the Administrator panel.



LTI names and roles service (Q2 2018) – This LTI service allows tools to request the course roster to create better end user experiences. For example, an assessment tool might request the roster to present instructors with grading progress information by showing students who have and have not submitted; or an interactive tool might allow creating groups of students from roster information.



Quality and maintenance

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) User Report (Q4 2018*) – In compliance with the requirement of the GDPR to allow users to receive human-readable reports of personal information that has been collected about them, administrators may submit a case on Behind the Blackboard to request the user’s exported report package. The reports generated are CSV files with site- and course-level information about the user’s activity, tool interactions, uploaded content, or submitted work within Blackboard Learn.

User Privacy improvements in accordance with GDPR (Q4 2018)

– As a part of our commitment to protect the privacy of users, updates have been made in accordance with changing global data and privacy regulations – including those of the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). For example, enhancements include:

- Increased visibility of Blackboard’s privacy and data use as well as terms of use statements
- The ability for an institution to add their own privacy and data use statement
- An updated end-user acceptance experience with additional data use disclosures when using Blackboard Learn for the first time.

New REST APIs and enhancements (Q2 & Q4 2018)

New REST APIs and enhancements to previously-released web services include: calendar, content, content file attachments, course grade attempts, course gradebook categories, courses v2 including cross-listing, privacy, course roles, system roles, course copy, course tasks/status, LTI configure domains, gradebook attempts, grade schemas, other gradebook improvements and grading periods.

Password reset enhancement (Q2 2018) – When using Learn’s password reset function, the password reset URL sent through email now expires in fifteen minutes for greater security.

Performance improvements (Q4 2018) – We have made several performance improvements in areas such as content management (Xythos) and the Purge Accumulator. Multiple areas of logging have also been improved to reduce log volumes.

For more details on the contents of each release, see the Release Notes on [help.blackboard.com](#). Visit the [Blackboard Community](#) site to join other institutions in the [Upgrade Club](#). Plus, provide your product suggestions and vote on ideas for our upcoming releases in the [Blackboard Idea Exchange](#).

* This feature was also made available for one or more prior releases via a Cumulative Update. Please check Behind the Blackboard for more information.