# Upgrading to the Q2 2018 release from the Q4 2016 release?

# Share the good news with your instructors.

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**Email subject line suggestions:**

* Check out what’s new with Blackboard Learn
* Updates to Blackboard Learn: What it means to you
* New Blackboard Learn features for your courses
* Save time with these new updates to Blackboard
* Enhancements to Blackboard that will save you time

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Dear [insert name],

We’re excited to announce we’re updating Blackboard Learn on [insert date]. The updated version will provide new features and enhancements that simplify many of your everyday tasks, offer a better mobile experience, and improve accessibility, assessment and grading.

Here are some of the top highlights of this new version: (Note: We suggest highlighting 3-5 things that you feel your educators will be most excited about, see below for a sample list.)

1. **Record audio and video feedback for students** – Now you can create personalized audio and video feedback recordings to create a more meaningful, engaging experience for your students.
2. **Integrate with your cloud storage solution of choice** – Adding content to your course just got easier. You can now upload documents directly from OneDrive, OneDrive for Business, Google Drive including G suite accounts, Dropbox, and Box when authoring content items or creating assignments. Students can also upload assignments directly from their preferred solution.
3. **Track attendance easily.** For each class meeting, you can now 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. And profile pictures appear on the Attendance page, so you can easily identify students.
4. **Improved mobile experience.** When accessing Learn on your mobile device, look for the new hamburger icon that makes navigating Learn even easier. Plus, many tools are now mobile-friendly including Blogs, Journals, Discussion Boards, Tests and the Learning Modules tool. *NOTE: Requires the Learn 2016 theme. Delete if you’re not using the theme.*
5. **Grading using the Blackboard Instructor app –** Grading on the go just got easier. With the Blackboard Instructor mobile app, you can now review assignment submissions and attachments, provide comments and inline annotations, grade with rubrics, and publish grades to students.
6. **Gradebook enhancements.** You can now delete multiple gradebook columns at once, view full titles of Grade Center columns, view as many columns as the size of your window will allow, and enter Grade Center full-screen mode – all to make managing the gradebook even easier**.** Note: the above *except* deleting multiple gradebook columns requires the Learn 2016 theme. Delete these items if this theme is not being used.
7. **Discussion board “Replies to me.”** Keeping up with discussion posts is simpler with unread replies to your own posts now more clearly identified.
8. **Course availability status.** An open or closed padlock icon on the main course page makes it easy to see the availability of the course to students; and with one click you can quickly change the status.
9. **Additional drag and drop locations.** Now you can drag and drop content in more places:the content editor, blogs, journals, and portfolios.
10. **Accessibility simplified with Blackboard Ally****.** Improve the accessibility of your content for students with disabilities. Using Ally, you can view an accessibility score for your content and learn ways to improve the accessibility of materials. Your students can also download automatically-generated alternative versions of your files, such as accessible HTML, digital braille, and audio format files. Note: Delete if your institution does not license Blackboard Ally.
11. **Web conferencing tools for groups.** Increase student group engagement by offering web conferencing tools. Synchronous collaboration, content sharing and whiteboarding are sure to get your students involved. Note: Delete if your institution does not license Collaborate.

**More information.**

Please see the two attached resources. The first is a flyer that provides an overview of what’s new in the latest version of Blackboard Learn. The second is a feature guide that provides detailed information on all the updates. (Note: You will find these 2 resources in the Communication & Adoption toolkit on help.blackboard.com – you can customize them for your institution.) Additionally, here are a few additional resources we think you may find useful:

* [Blackboard Innovative Teaching Series (BITS):](https://community.blackboard.com/groups/higheredbits) Blackboard hosts BITS webinars to share strategies and best practices for increasing educator efficiency and improving learning outcomes. You can register for live webinars or watch recordings of past events.
* [Blackboard Community Educator Group](http://community.blackboard.com/community/questions/educator): Connect with other educators across the world that are using Blackboard through Blackboard’s Community Site.
* [Blackboard Help Site](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn): Find detailed documentation on all the features and functionality in Learn on Blackboard’s Help Site.

If you have any questions about the latest updates, please feel free to reach out.

Regards,

[Signature]