Blackboard

Blackboard Learn™
Q2 2019 Release Highlights

Overview of the Blackboard Learn™ 9.1 Q2 2019 release

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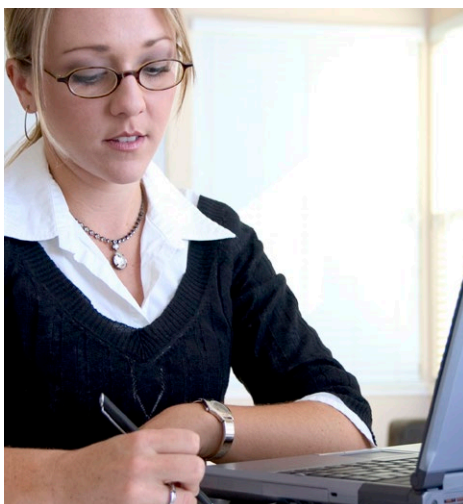
Engagement and efficiency

Assessment and grading

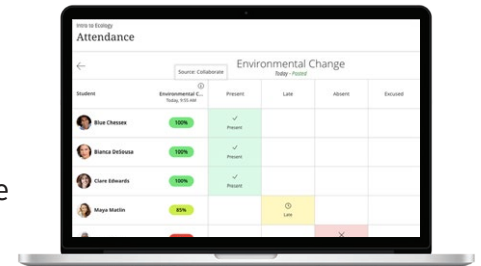Standards and interoperability

Quality and maintenance

Engagement and Efficiency

Calendar items and due date notifications for additional content types
To give users a single, comprehensive view of their class requirements and activities, Calendar and To Do modules are now expanded to include the due dates from additional content types including manual columns, SCORM, and those from third-party solutions.

New Facilitator course role and more granular permissions – For institutions that centrally manage course development and settings, these more granular course role permissions enable roles to teach, engage, and grade but not modify materials or settings. There is also a new default course role called Facilitator. As with other default course roles, the specific permissions can be edited.
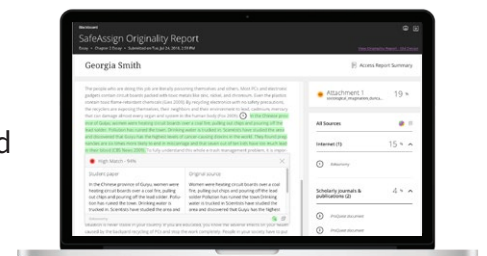
Blackboard Collaborate™ attendance integration* – For instructors hosting Collaborate sessions, taking attendance is now automated, eliminating the need for manual tracking. Collaborate session attendance will be recorded within the Attendance page of the Learn course, will be counted in each student's average attendance in the course, and can be factored into students' grades.

Content Collection updates – To improve the performance and usability of the Content Collection, files uploaded as part of a SCORM package are now shown in the Content Collection folder, and when versioned files are imported/restored, the version number is indicated in the file name.

Assessment & Grading

New SafeAssign Originality Report – The SafeAssign Originality Report has been updated and reformatted for improved usability, responsiveness, and accessibility. It employs Blackboard's Ultra design philosophy and includes new information about the overall risk of a submission having been copied from another source.

Improved Grades Journey support for merged courses – Institutions using merged courses can now more readily use all the capabilities of Grades Journey.

Standards and interoperability

To ensure you're able to integrate your portfolio of solutions with Blackboard Learn in a deep, rich, and consistent way, we continue to invest significantly in building more REST APIs, supporting Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI), and supporting additional IMS standards like Questions and Test Interoperability (QTI). The result of these efforts will ease the transition from Building Blocks to LTI and REST, create an increasingly consistent user experience between the Original and Ultra experiences, and ensure a deep integration between our products and others—all to drive toward the most powerful user experience for instructors and students.

LTI Advantage certified and in production
We're excited to share that Blackboard Learn is the first major LMS to be LTI Advantage certified and to make LTI Advantage available in production. LTI Advantage is the latest in interoperability standards for integrating tools into a learning environment. The capabilities of LTI Advantage allow for deeper, richer, and more consistent and secure integrations than with the previous versions of LTI.

Support for IMS Global's Questions and Test Interoperability (QTI) specification – To simplify your online management of assessment, instructors and course builders are now able to add and export Learn question pools as QTI packages.

Cross-origin resourcing tool for administrators
Administrators can now allow an external script or third-party application to make direct calls to their Blackboard Learn instance's REST APIs.

New REST APIs and enhancements – These releases include new REST APIs and enhancements to previously released web services, including attendance, course categories, course group users (updated), file attachments for submission attempts, course grade attempts (updated), proctoring and observers.

Quality and maintenance

SAML updates – Using SAML with Learn is now more secure and compatible in this release by improving the logout process for SAML single sign-on sessions and enabling administrators to configure the SAML session age as unlimited.

Data integration logs storage load reduced – To enhance performance and reduce system strain by improving the way data integration logs store information in the shared file system, searches in SIS logs are now limited to seven-day date ranges.

Software library updates – Various third-party and open source libraries have been updated throughout the application to improve security.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) User Report** – Blackboard is committed to protecting the privacy of all users and complying with changing global regulations related to the use of data and privacy. This release strengthens our GDPR compliance by expanding user reports to include attendance tool data and by improving the structure of user activity data.

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.

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*Only applicable if your institution licenses Blackboard Collaborate.

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

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