Blackboard®
LEARN

Blackboard Learn™
Q2 and Q4 2019 Release Highlights

Overview of the Blackboard Learn™ 9.1 Q2 and Q4 2019 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
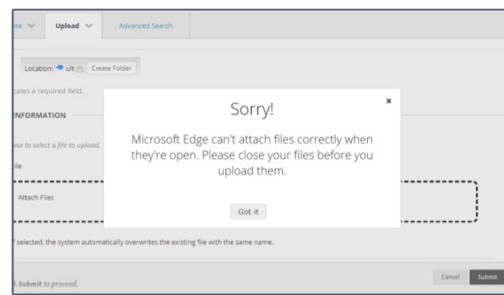
- Standards and interoperability

- Quality and maintenance

Engagement and Efficiency

Open file upload warning for Edge browser users (Q4 2019)

Due to a known Microsoft Edge issue, users who access Learn through the Microsoft Edge browser have encountered problems attaching and submitting open Microsoft Office files. To minimize user frustration, Learn now prompts Microsoft Edge users to close files before uploading them.

Course availability controls now in more places (Q4 2019)

The popular course availability indicator and toggle control for courses is now accessible on additional tools and management pages, like the Discussion Board page.

Usability improvements for the Learn 2016 Theme (Q4 2019)

Improvements for the Learn 2016 Theme in this release include:
- When configured, course color menus also apply to the pop-out course menu

- Contextual menus now display with dividers between sections

- Tab and sub-tab navigation improvements for unauthenticated users who use Tab Page (Direct Access) as the start page

Calendar items and due date notifications for additional content types (Q2 2019)
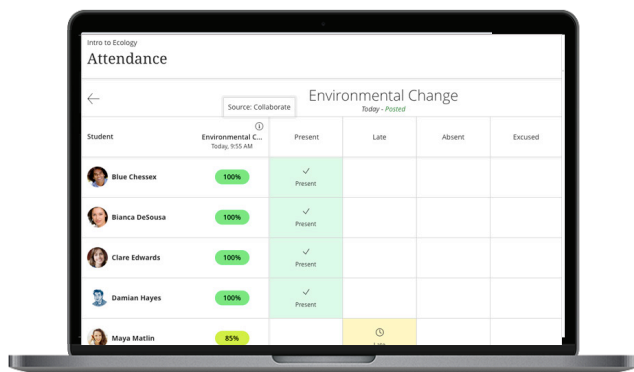
To give users a single, comprehensive view of their class requirements and activities, Calendar and To Do modules are now expanded to include the due dates from additional content types including manual columns, SCORM, and those from third-party solutions.

New Facilitator course role and more granular permissions (Q2 2019)

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.

Blackboard Collaborate™ attendance integration* (Q2 2019)

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 (Q2 2019)

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.
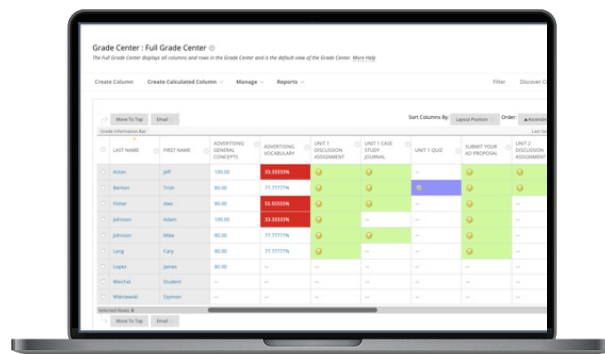
Assessment and Grading

Needs Grading filter selection is remembered (Q4 2019)

On the Needs Grading page, an instructor's "Show attempts that don't contribute to user's grade" filter preference is now remembered across sessions and courses.
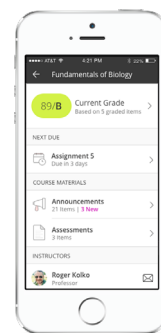
Grade Center improvements on desktop for the Learn 2016 Theme (Q4 2019)

For the Learn 2016 Theme, the cell padding in the Grade Center for desktop users has been decreased so that more Grade Center data will display.
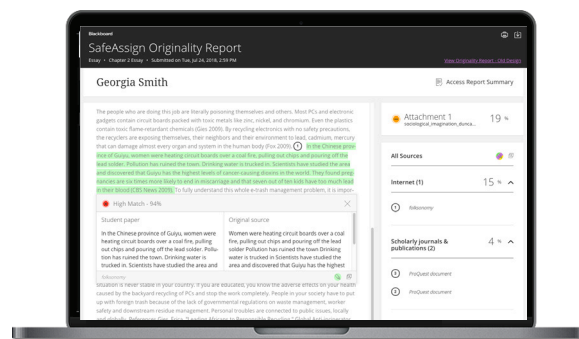

Grade Center improvements on mobile for the Learn 2016 Theme (Q4 2019)

To increase instructor efficiency on mobile devices, the behavior, display, and actions of the Grade Center's mobile card view are now more consistent with the grid view.

New SafeAssign Originality Report (Q2 2019)

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 (Q2 2019)

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 Learn Original and Learn Ultra, and ensure a deep integration between our products and others.

Java 11 JDK and Building Blocks (Q4 2019)

Learn 9.1's Q4 2019 release uses a new version of Java, Java 11 JDK. Java are the libraries on which the Learn application runs and the libraries that power Building Blocks. We're implementing Java 11 to improve security and performance. Staying on recently updated libraries is crucial to staying ahead of those who may try to compromise your learning environment. For additional resources on Java 11, view the Community site to read the blog, "8 Steps to Prepare for Java 11".

LTI Advantage certified and in production (Q2 2019)

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. It enables a deeper, richer, and more consistent and secure integrations than with the previous versions of LTI.

LTI Advantage improvements (Q4 2019):

- LTI Assignment and Grades Service – If a tool implements the grading and submission state handling in the LTI Assignment and Grades service, instructors will be able to see which students have submitted, including in the Needs Grading workflow, and whether grading has started. Students will have more accurate due and overdue notifications because their submissions will register with Blackboard Learn even if the submission requires grading before a score is sent to the grade book.

- Context Membership Service – For some time, tools using the Names and Roles Provisioning Service have been able to request a list of students in a class. Now, using an extension to this service, the Context Membership Service, tools can also request group definition and group membership data. Tools use this existing group data in Learn to create group activities or list filters without requiring instructors to set up their groups again.

- For additional LTI enhancements, see the Release Notes.

Support for IMS Global's Questions and Test Interoperability (QTI) specification (Q2 2019)

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 (Q2 2019)

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

New and enhanced REST APIs (Q2 & Q4 2019)

These releases include new REST APIs and enhancements to previously released web services, including: assignment (expanded, including attempt modified filter), attendance, content (expanded, including created/modified date filter), content review status (new), course categories (expanded, including filters), course grade attempts (updated), course group users (updated), course resources (new), file attachments for submission attempts, OAuth token (expanded, including create, compare, modify), performance dashboard (new), and proctoring and observers.

Pearson's MyLab and Mastering (MLM) integration (Q4 2019)

Major features of the Pearson MLM Building Block are available with the new Partner Cloud integration, including single sign-on, deep content linking, and manual grade synchronization. This integration works with both Learn Original and Learn Ultra which will help simplify the process for institutions moving to Ultra courses.

Quality and Maintenance

Authentication lockout after five failed login attempts (Q4 2019)

Too many failed attempts to log into a user account could be a security risk. In this release, when Blackboard Learn is involved in the authentication process (default authentication type or LDAP), administrators can decide when Learn locks user accounts to protect them from unauthorized access. By default, Learn will lock user accounts after 5 failed login attempts.

Administrator tools list displays alphabetically (Q4 2019)

To help administrators more easily find the tools they need, the Tools and Utilities list in the Administrator Panel now displays alphabetically.

Hostname configuration management (Q4 2019)

To improve security, all URLs allowed access to the application must be explicitly defined. This includes older URLs that institutions would still like to support because of historic links or bookmarks.

Legacy authentication type removed (Q4 2019)

With this release, we've removed the deprecated and unsupported "Legacy" authentication type from the Administrator Panel > Authentication. Custom authentications should use the extensible authentication framework instead.

Guest Account can't be enrolled in courses (Q4 2019)

To stop potential data exposure concerns between unauthenticated users, "Guest" accounts can no longer be enrolled in courses. Existing "Guest" account enrollments will remain and be visible to instructors and administrators for clean up through the user interface.

SAML updates (Q2 2019)

Using SAML with Learn is now more secure and compatible as the logout process for SAML single sign-on sessions has been improved, and the SAML session page can be set as unlimited.

Data integration logs storage load reduced (Q2 2019)

To enhance performance and reduce system strain, searches in SIS logs are now limited to seven-day date ranges.

Software library updates (Q2 2019)

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

> For more details on the contents of each release, see the Release Notes on help.blackboard.com. Plus, visit the Blackboard Community site to connect with your peers and Blackboard experts.

*Only applicable if your institution licenses Blackboard Collaborate.

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