

Blackboardlearn⁺

*Understanding the Change from
Blackboard Academic Suite 8 to
Blackboard Learn 9.1*



Blackboard

Worldwide Headquarters	International Headquarters
Blackboard Inc.	Blackboard International B.V.
650 Massachusetts Avenue NW Sixth Floor Washington, DC 20001-3796	Paleisstraat 1-5 1012RB Amsterdam The Netherlands
+1 800 424 9299 toll free US & Canada	
+1 202 463 4860 telephone	+31 (0) 20 788 2450 (NL) telephone
+1 202 463 4863 facsimile	+31 (0) 20 788 2451 (NL) facsimile
www.blackboard.com	www.blackboard.com

Copyright © 1997-2011. Blackboard, the Blackboard logo, BbWorld, Blackboard Learn, Blackboard Transact, Blackboard Connect, the Blackboard Outcomes System, Behind the Blackboard, and Connect-ED are trademarks or registered trademarks of Blackboard Inc. or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. U.S. Patent Numbers: 6,988,138; 7,493,396; 6,816,878.

Sun™, Java™, JDK™, JVM™, JDBC™, Solaris™, Microsoft®, Windows®, Windows Server®, Windows Vista®, SQL Server®, Internet Explorer®, Oracle®, Red Hat®, Enterprise Linux®, Apple®, Mac OS®, Tiger®, Leopard®, Snow Leopard®, Safari®, Apache Tomcat™, Tomcat™, Mozilla®, Firefox®, JAWS for Windows®, VMware®, Xen™, Wimba Pronto™, Acxiom Identify-X™, NBC®, Follett™, Barnes & Noble® BN.com®, are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners.

Other product and company names mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

No part of the contents of this manual may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without the written permission of the publisher, Blackboard Inc.

Contents

Introduction.....	11
Fostering Student Engagement.....	11
Supporting Educator Efficiency	11
Delivering Open and Extensible Learning	12
Available Tools and Resources	13
Blackboard Upgrade Center	13
Preview Accounts and the Project NG Playground	13
Upgrade Services	13
Blackboard Learn Upgrade Kits.....	13
On-Demand Learning Center	14
Blackboard Learn Help	14
Blackboard Learn Technical Details	14
About This Document	15
Product Naming and Terminology	15
Course Delivery Features	17
Removed Features	18
Accessibility	19
Frequently Asked Questions	19
Adaptive Release	20
Feature Enhancement.....	20
Announcements	21
Feature Enhancement.....	21
Feature Loss.....	21
Assignments.....	22
What's New in this Release?	22
Feature Enhancement.....	22
Feature Loss.....	23
Frequently Asked Questions	23
Blackboard Connect Integration.....	25
Frequently Asked Questions	25
Blogs and Journals.....	27
Journals	27
Blogs.....	27
Grading Blogs and Journals	27
Frequently Asked Questions	28
Branding and Customization	29
Single Login Page	29
Brand Customization	29
Feature Enhancement.....	29
Feature Loss.....	30

Frequently Asked Questions	31
Calendar.....	33
Feature Enhancement	33
Course Customizations	34
Direct Access to Course Management Tools	34
Multiple Methods of Content Presentation.....	34
Increased Options for Course Design and Style	34
Simplified Tool Management	35
Frequently Asked Questions	35
Course Files.....	36
Using Course Files for Basic Content Management.....	36
Attaching Files to Course Content and for Re-Using Files	36
Uploading Files	37
Managing HTML	37
Viewing Images as Thumbnails	37
Course Files with the Content Collection.....	37
Frequently Asked Questions	38
Course Navigation and Content	41
Feature Enhancement	41
Feature Loss.....	43
Course/Organization Role Customization	44
Creating Custom Course/Organization Roles	44
Custom Course/Organization Roles with Community Engagement.....	44
Frequently Asked Questions	44
Discussions	46
Feature Enhancement	46
Email and Messages	47
Feature Enhancement	47
External Links.....	48
Feature Enhancement	48
Glossary	49
Feature Enhancement	49
Grade Center – Instructor Views	50
Feature Enhancement	50
Feature Change.....	51
Frequently Asked Questions	51
Grade Center – My Grades	52
Feature Enhancement	52
Groups	53
What's New in this Release?	53
Feature Enhancement	54
Frequently Asked Questions	55

Learning Modules	56
Feature Enhancement	56
Frequently Asked Questions	57
Lesson Plans for HigherEd and ProEd Clients	58
Creating Customized Lesson Plans	58
Controlling Visibility	58
Frequently Asked Questions	58
Lesson Plans for K-12 Clients	60
Creating Customized Lesson Plans	60
Controlling Visibility	60
Aligning Content to Learning Standards	60
Frequently Asked Questions	60
Mashups.....	62
Uploading Mashups Content	62
Filtering YouTube Content.....	62
Frequently Asked Questions	62
My Places.....	64
Feature Enhancement	64
Frequently Asked Questions	65
Notifications	66
What's New in this Release for Instructors?	66
What's New in this Release for Students?.....	66
What's New in this Release for Administrators?	67
Frequently Asked Questions	67
Standards Alignment for K-12 Clients	71
Importing Standards into Blackboard Courses	71
Aligning Content to Standards	71
Updating Standards	72
Running Standards Coverage Reports.....	72
Creating Custom Standards	72
Frequently Asked Questions	73
System-Wide Changes	75
Feature Enhancement	75
Feature Loss.....	75
System Administration	77
Feature Enhancement	77
Feature Change.....	77
Tests, Surveys, and Question Pools	78
Feature Enhancement	78
Feature Loss.....	79
Frequently Asked Questions	79
Text Editor	80

Feature Enhancement	80
Textbook	81
Tracking Reports.....	82
Web Services and Proxy Tools.....	83
Feature Enhancement	83
Feature Loss.....	85
Frequently Asked Questions	85
What's New Module	87
Feature Enhancement	87
Wikis.....	88
Supporting Collaborative Learning	88
Creating and Editing Wikis	88
Versioning and Comparing Pages.....	88
Grading Wikis	88
Viewing Participation Summaries	89
Commenting on Wiki Pages	89
Creating Wiki Links as Course Content.....	89
Using Adaptive Release	89
Importing and Exporting Content.....	89
Aligning Wikis with K-12 Standards.....	89
Frequently Asked Questions	89
Community Engagement Features	91
Feature Enhancement	91
Frequently Asked Questions	91
Content Management Features	93
Building Content	94
Feature Enhancement	94
Frequently Asked Questions	94
Passes and Permissions	95
Feature Enhancement	95
Frequently Asked Questions	95
Recycle Bins.....	96
Providing Individual Recycle Bins for Users, Courses, and Organizations	96
Scheduling Recycle Bin Retention and Purging	96
Setting the Recycle Bin View Policy	96
Frequently Asked Questions	96
Search Content.....	98
Feature Enhancement	98
Views and Navigation	99
Feature Enhancement	99
Feature Change.....	99

Outcomes Assessment Features	100
Artifacts	101
Feature Enhancement	101
Frequently Asked Questions	101
Batch Operations	103
Feature Enhancement	103
Frequently Asked Questions	103
Criteria List Operators	105
Feature Enhancement	105
Frequently Asked Questions	105
Deployments	106
Feature Enhancement	106
Frequently Asked Questions about Deployments	107
Gradable Content Alignment	108
Feature Enhancement	108
Frequently Asked Questions	108
Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 1 (SP1)	110
Course Delivery Features	111
Community Engagement Features	113
Content Management Features	114
Outcomes Assessment Features	115
System Administration	116
Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 2 (SP2)	117
System Administration Features	118
New fields “Suffix” and “Other Name”	118
Installer enables /Courses content area when upgrading to 9.1.	119
CaféScribe Building Block	120
Other Building Blocks	120
Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 3 (SP3)	121
Course Delivery Features	122
Community Engagement Features	124
System Administration	125
Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 4 (SP4)	126
Course Delivery	127
Support for Common Cartridge	127
Learning Tools Interoperability	127
Assessments	127
Community Engagement	128
Discovering Modules	128
Outcomes Assessment	129
Curriculum Maps	129

Distribution Lists	129
Blackboard Connect	130
Country Codes Available	130
System Administration	131
Data Sources	131
Search and Select All	131
Support for Google Analytics™	131
Resource Governor	131
Global XSS Filtering	134
Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 5 (SP5)	135
Default Maximum Upload Limit.....	135
Known and Resolved Issues	135
Course Files Move Utility.....	135
Security.....	136
Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 6 (SP6)	137
Course Delivery	138
Needs Grading	138
Timed Assessments	138
Test Announcements.....	138
Interactive Rubrics.....	138
SCORM Engine Integration	138
Content Management.....	139
Adaptive Release Rules Work on Content Collection Items.....	139
Desktop Integration	139
Automatic Student Access to Linked Files	139
Community Engagement.....	140
Institutional Hierarchy	140
Outcomes Assessment	141
Evidence Collection	141
Standard, Objective, and Goal (SOG) Alignment to Course Delivery Content.....	141
Standard, Objective, and Goal (SOG) Coverage Reports.....	141
Partner Integration	142
McGraw-Hill Connect and Create Integration	142
System Administration	143
Software Updates	143
The Batch UID Can be Used as a Context Identifier for a Basic Learning Tool Interoperability (LTI) Tool Provider	143
Custom Parameters in Basic Learning Tool Interoperability (LTI) Configuration	143
Web Services Enabled Automatically for Building Blocks	143
Page Scroll Location Maintained During Refresh.....	144
Select All.....	144
Student Information System Integration Building Block.....	144

Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 8 (SP8)	145
Course Delivery	146
Course Relationship Management	146
Term Support	146
Course-to-Course Navigation	146
Student Activity Reports	146
Goal, Content Alignment, and Course Performance Reports	147
Goal Coverage Reports	147
Automated Regrading	148
Negative Marking	148
Course Structures	148
Course Themes	148
Quick Setup Guide	149
New Default 2012 Theme Upon Fresh Install	149
Action Bar Functions in Content Area Have Been Renamed	149
Users Can Choose to Create Link to Course Tool	149
Add Menu Item Redesigned	149
New View Grade History Option	149
Improvements to Handling Mini-Websites and File Packages	149
Content Management	152
Goal Alignment to Files	152
Orphaned Content	152
Archive/Export With Files in Content Collection	152
Improvements to Handling Mini-Websites and File Packages	152
Community Engagement	153
Institutional Hierarchy	153
Customized Login Pages Possible for Multiple Brands	153
eCommerce Replaced by eAccounts and ePOS	153
Outcomes Assessment	154
Evaluation Workflow	154
Reporting Efficiency	154
User Experience Enhancements	154
Goals Update	154
Goals Coverage Reports	154
Partner Integration	155
McGraw-Hill 2.0 Building Block	155
Kaltura Video Building Block	155
Follett CafeScribe Building Block	155
Barnes & Noble NOOK Study Building Block	155
Internships.com Building Block	156
NBC Learn	156
Building Blocks	158

Bboogle Building Block	158
About the Paste From Word Mashup Building Block.....	158
Accessing the Building Blocks	159
System Administration	160
SIS DATA Integration Framework Improvements	160
Learning Information Services (LIS) 2.0 Support	160
ActiveMQ	161
Manage Tasks with New <code>bbconfig.server.backend.processor</code> Setting	161
Emergency One-time Login URL.....	161
Basic LTI Enhancements.....	162
Orphaned Content	162
Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 10 (SP10)	163
System Administration	164
Cloud Settings	164
New Content Editor	164
File Picker	165
Learning Tools and Interoperability (LTI 1.1).....	165
Security.....	166
Input Validation Filter	166
Alternate File Domain Settings for Serving Content	166
Cookie Disclosure Building Block	166
Related Security Advisories.....	167
Course Delivery.....	168
Assessment Item Analysis.....	168
Assessment Fill-in-the-Blank Question Enhancement	168
Enterprise Surveys and Course Evaluations	168
Global Navigation	168
My Blackboard	169
Content Management.....	171
Set Default Course Files Properties for Course Copy, Export, and Archive.....	171
Copy Course File Attachments.....	171
New User Warnings for Deleting or Moving Linked Folders or Files	171
Partner Integration	172
ConnectTxt	172
NBC Learn	172

Introduction

Challenged with meeting the expectations of their 21st-century learners, educators are constantly trying to find ways to make their instruction more engaging.

Faculty spend a lot of time on non-teaching administrative activities, such as grading, data-entry, paperwork, and Course management, that distract from learning activities which help retain and keep students engaged in academics.

Colleges, schools, and departments often spend significant amounts of time and resources on manual processes to align what is happening in the classroom to department, program or overall institutional objectives.

Clients are trying to navigate a time of significant demographic shifts and technology innovation while maintaining the integrity of the academic process, accessibility, service quality and accountability to leadership.

Blackboard Learn™ Release 9.1 will help you to meet these challenges by fostering student engagement, supporting educator efficiency, and delivering open and extensible learning.

Fostering Student Engagement

The exciting new social learning and teaching tools available in Release 9.1 foster more logical, visually impactful, and active learning opportunities for students, helping them stay connected to their educational experience 24 hours a day:

- Learning Modules Table of Contents view
- Wikis for Courses, Organizations, and Groups
- Mashups
- Integration with Blackboard Connect
- Student Notifications and Dashboard
- Group area and Group tools
- Accessibility
- Web 2.0 user experience

Supporting Educator Efficiency

Many of the new features and enhancements in Release 9.1 save educators and organizational leaders time and effort and make it easier to focus on student achievement and retention:

- Learning Modules Table of Contents view
- Improved grading capabilities
- Course Files area for managing content
- Standards Alignment for K-12 Clients
- Customizable Teaching Roles
- Instructor Dashboard
- Web 2.0 user experience

Delivering Open and Extensible Learning

With free access to partner technologies, expanded content partnerships and hundreds of building block extensions to choose from in Release 9.1, Blackboard Learn's open platform is designed to meet the learning needs of an institution at enterprise scale with an open architecture that supports agility and extensibility.

- Mashups
- Building Blocks and the Blackboard Developers Network
- Web Services
- Themes
- Accessibility

Available Tools and Resources

Transitioning to a platform can often be an expensive proposition. Institutions and organizations face many costs including content conversion, end user training, and project management. Institutional and organizational leaders have to evaluate the financial costs as well as the cost to end users when making the decision to move. For Release 9.1, Blackboard is delivering tools, resources, and services to reduce the change management costs of transitioning to Release 9.1, both in terms of educator or facilitator time and institutional and organizational resources.

Blackboard Upgrade Center

The new [Blackboard Upgrade Center](#) was created to help you find all the information you need to make the upgrade process as simple as possible. This site is designed for Blackboard administrators, system administrators or anyone involved in the process of upgrading Blackboard from a technical or procedural standpoint.

Preview Accounts and the Project NG Playground

Reading about a new release and experiencing it are two different things. We know that you probably want to get a feel for Release 9.1 before you go through the work of setting up a pilot or test instance. Sign up for a preview account that will give you instructor level access in a Release 9.1 Course hosted by Blackboard. You can investigate Release 9.1 and invite others at your institution to access the software and contribute to the development of your upgrade plan. This account is available for 30 days and can be renewed at the end of its term.

Blackboard wants to share some of our newest ideas for Blackboard Learn and get your feedback to help shape future releases. The Project NG Playground Program is an exciting way to get a sneak peek at functionality while it's still in the experimental stages. Try the newest features on our hosted playground server and experience them from a student, teacher, and instructional designer perspective.

For more information, go to [Step 1.2 – Preview and Play](#) on the Upgrade Center.

Upgrade Services

Experience tells us that some institutions would like additional support and assistance in upgrading, so we've developed a host of custom services offerings and assistance that work as your virtual upgrade team. Let us help you with the upgrade by taking advantage of the expertise of the Blackboard Consulting Services team.

For more information, go to [Step 2.4 – Preview and Play](#) on the Upgrade Center.

Blackboard Learn Upgrade Kits

To assist in the upgrade process, Blackboard has produced an Upgrade Kit comprised of documentation resources specific to your upgrade path. For a detailed list and explanation of each document, see the `ReadMe.txt` file included in the Blackboard Academic Suite 8 to Blackboard Learn 9.1 Upgrade Kit available on the [Upgrade Center](#) or [Behind the Blackboard](#).

On-Demand Learning Center

The [On-Demand Learning Center](#) provides access to Quick Start Guides and Video Tutorials for many features in Release 9.1. In addition to accessing the site directly, users with the appropriate roles can access the site from the My Institution tab, the Course Panel, and the Administrator Panel.

Blackboard Learn Help

A full suite of reference materials for Blackboard Learn 9.1 is available Blackboard Help is available to everyone through Blackboard Learn and at <http://help.blackboard.com>.

Blackboard Learn Technical Details

The full technical details for Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, including the Release Notes, Supported Technologies and Browsers, the Resolved Issues from previous releases, and Known Issues in the current release, are available on the [Maintenance Center](#) on Behind the Blackboard.

About This Document

Release 9.1 includes exciting new product innovations, and Blackboard is committed to providing the tools and resources necessary to help you plan and prepare for your upgrade.

This document is designed to give the users a comprehensive look at the features and functions of Blackboard Learn™, Release 9.1, and how they compare to the Blackboard Academic Suite, Release 8. This document includes information about the following:

- [Course Delivery Features](#)
- [Community Engagement Features](#)
- [Content Management Features](#)
- [Outcomes Assessment Features](#)
- [Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 Service Pack 1 \(SP1\) Features](#)
- [Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 Service Pack 2 \(SP2\) Features](#)
- [Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 Service Pack 3 \(SP3\) Features](#)
- [Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 Service Pack 4 \(SP4\) Features](#)
- [Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 Service Pack 5 \(SP5\) Features](#)
- [Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 Service Pack 6 \(SP6\) Features](#)
- [Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 Service Pack 8 \(SP8\) Features](#)

Product Naming and Terminology

Blackboard Learn is the new name of the Blackboard Academic Suite. It represents the singular purpose of the software suite and will help resolve some of the confusion around product names and terminology that are holdovers from the Blackboard-WebCT merger.

Blackboard Learn features and functions are grouped into sets of capabilities. The table below identifies the product and names for sets of capabilities that are used to define Blackboard Learn.

Name	Description
Blackboard Learn	Blackboard's flagship product for enabling teaching and learning online.
Course delivery capabilities	Includes features and functions for creating online Courses. Prior to Release 9.0, this was known as the Learning System.
Content management capabilities	Includes tools for storing, managing, and presenting content as well as tools for collaborating on content with other users. Prior to Release 9.0, this was known as the Content System.
Community engagement capabilities	Includes features and functions for building out a vibrant and diverse learning community as well as tools for delegated system administration. Prior to Release 9.0, this was known as the Community System.
Outcomes assessment capabilities	Includes features and functions to measure the success of institution learning initiatives. Prior to Release 9.0, this was known as the Outcomes System.

Name	Description
Building Blocks	Building Blocks is the catch-all name for the program and interfaces used to integrate tools and outside systems with Blackboard Learn.
Basic Edition	An entry-level version of Blackboard Learn that includes a subset of the features available with the Course delivery capabilities.
Enterprise Edition	The standard version of Blackboard Learn. This term is used to differentiate it from the Basic Edition. Other capabilities are licensed separately.

Course Delivery Features

Blackboard Learn 9.1 includes many innovations that are grouped in the following categories:

- [Accessibility](#)
- [Adaptive Release](#)
- [Announcements](#)
- [Assignments](#)
- [Blackboard Connect Integration](#)
- [Blogs and Journals](#)
- [Branding and Customization](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Course Customizations](#)
- [Course Files](#)
- [Course Navigation and Content](#)
- [Course/Organization Role Customization](#)
- [Discussions](#)
- [Email and Messages](#)
- [External Links](#)
- [Glossary](#)
- [Grade Center – Instructor Views](#)
- [Grade Center – My Grades](#)
- [Groups](#)
- [Learning Modules](#)
- [Lesson Plans for HigherEd and ProEd Clients](#)
- [Lesson Plans for K-12 Clients](#)
- [Mashups](#)
- [My Places](#)
- [Notifications](#)
- [Standards Alignment for K-12 Clients](#)
- [System-Wide Changes](#)
- [System Administration Changes](#)
- [Tests, Surveys, and Question Pools](#)
- [Text Editor](#)
- [Textbook](#)
- [Tracking Reports](#)
- [Web Services and Proxy Tools](#)

- [What's New Module](#)
- [Wikis](#)

Innovations in each of these areas represent the confluence of best-of-breed features and functions from earlier Blackboard products.

Removed Features

Electric Blackboard

Now Students can use Journals to complete these same tasks—it is also much more fully featured than the Electric Blackboard tool. For more information, see [Blogs and Journals](#).

Digital Dropbox

The more robust Assignments tool and the Group File Exchange feature meets the needs of individual users and groups for completing and managing Course work. These functions made the Digital Drop Box obsolete. For more information, see [Assignments](#).

Student Homepages

Student homepages are no longer needed because the new Blogs tool enables Students to express their thoughts and reflect on learning within a Course and the My Places tool allows Student to post their avatar system-wide (instead of limited to the Course environment) and includes additional functionality and a customizable set of links to frequently accessed information as well as tools to personalize a user's own experience. For more information, see [Blogs and Journals](#).

eCommerce

This add-on product line is no longer available with Blackboard Learn.

Offline Content

Offline Content can no longer be added to a Course. The Offline content type will no longer be available when uploading content. For more information about available Content Types, see [Course Navigation and Content](#).

Accessibility

Most of what makes Blackboard Learn so easy to use for all users, including those with assistive technologies, is under-the-covers with a combination of CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) and semantic markup (that is, well formed HTML). Additional accessibility features include:

Keyboard Accessible Reordering: The Keyboard-Accessible Reordering component provides the user with an alternate method to reorder content groupings in columns and rows that would otherwise be completed using Drag and Drop. This component is positioned as a secondary emphasis page-level action.

Personal styles accepted: Users can adjust the font size and other style elements in their browser regardless of the style sheet that is in place. These adjustments will remain as long as the user is logged into the system.

Embedded and optional help: The embedded help throughout the application helps users with and without disabilities easily access the features of Blackboard. The personal setting to hide or show help until the user chooses to call upon it again helps users from both perspectives: it removes text from the application that may be distracting, or it adds text to the application that helps them without forcing them to leave what they are doing. The Personal setting is found in My Places, and the on-the-fly change can be executed using the help icon in the top right corner of any page with help available.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

No. Every capability of Blackboard Learn is designed to support accessibility.

Are there any changes to existing workflows?

Note that this release has a significant impact on the workflow of nearly all tasks for the purpose of improving the usability. Overall these change result in a positive change with a more intuitive user interface, but this is most challenging to learn for the blind or visually impaired user, because they have memorized the pathway to all of their activities. The structure provided in Release 9.1 is drastically improved to help guide them to easy discovery.

Is everything accessible and highly usable in Release 9.1?

No. Accessible users should be aware of the following issues:

- **Virtual Classroom:** Although the Accessible Chat alternative is provided, this is not considered “equal access” to all users.
- **JavaScript Requirement:** The requirement of JavaScript to use Blackboard is sometimes considered not accessible. However, the login page of Blackboard recognizes if the user does not have JavaScript enabled and informs the user of the requirement. This means that for all users (sighted, not sighted, one who understands browsers or not), Blackboard responds in the same way – by informing them of what needs to be done.

Adaptive Release

The function of Adaptive Release for Course content is the same as the previous release with a few minor enhancements and an improved user experience.

Feature Enhancement

+ Content Notifications

Students are notified when content is made available via Adaptive Release.

+ Fewer Clicks to Create and Manage Adaptive Release Rules

Managing adaptive release rules is immediately visible in the contextual menu.

Announcements

The features in the Announcements tool are very similar to those in previous releases of Blackboard Learn. While the announcements filter has been removed, faculty and administrators will enjoy a number of new flexible options for displaying announcements.

Feature Enhancement

+ Multiple Display Options

Announcements can be displayed on both a Course Announcements page, a portal Announcements module and in a Course specific Announcements module giving the Instructors added flexibility over how the information is presented.

+ Priority Ordering

Instructors have the ability to re-order the display of announcements so the most important information will appear first.

+ Options to only Display Course Announcements

Instructors may select to only display Course announcements in their Course, and not display system announcements. This enables Instructors to reserve Course announcements for pertinent information and reduces the noise level of announcements within the Course.

+ Login Page Announcements

Administrators can communicate critical information to users before they login by placing Announcements directly on the login page. Institutions should develop and communicate business rules for displaying announcements prior to login.

+ Advanced Filtering Options

Advanced filtering options to display All, Course only, and System only announcements enable users to easily find important announcements and recover critical details.

+ Notifications

Notifications of new Course Announcements will appear on users' dashboards and may be sent via email according to the user's personal preferences.

Feature Loss

- Announcement Filter

Users are no longer able to view just the announcements posted from the current day. Communicate to the faculty the increased flexibility provided with new reordering capabilities to ensure that Students are getting the most important information and are not missing announcements due to date filters.

- Announcement Text in Email

Email notifications for announcements include a link to the announcement, but do not include the full body of the announcement text.

Assignments

The features of the Blackboard Learn Assignment tool allow groups of Students to work on and submit assignments together, as well as individually. This provides Instructors with the ability to assign a single grade to all of the Students in the group without losing the ability to override an individual's grade if necessary. This tool facilitates an interactive learning process by providing faculty with the ability to permit multiple attempts of the same assignment. This allows Students to edit, add to, and improve their original effort and allows Instructors to provide a grade and feedback for each submission.

Users will enjoy a number of new enhancements to the Assignments feature, such as the ability for Students to submit multiple attempts of an assignment when the Instructor would like to see iterative progress. Instructors can also allow Students to turn in additional attempts of an assignment for exceptional cases or submissions. Additionally, faculty has more flexibility when it comes to submitting grades for their Students.

What's New in this Release?

Instructors can deploy Assignments to all Students individually or to groups of Students. If an Instructor selects to deploy Assignments to groups of Students, the Instructor will be able to choose which groups receive the Assignment. One group member will submit the assignment for the whole group. The Instructor provides one grade to the submission and all members of the group receive the same grade automatically. Instructors can provide individual members with a separate grade if necessary.

Instructors can allow Students to submit multiple attempts for the same assignment. Each of these attempts can be graded and commented on individually. Both Students and Instructors can track progress throughout the assignment. Instructors can specify how many attempts are allowed or allow an unlimited number of attempts. If the specific number of attempts were completed by a Student, the Instructor can allow an additional attempt if required.

Students can attach a file and include additional information and hyperlinks in their assignment attempt using a Submission field instead of simply attaching a file.

Feature Enhancement

+ Multiple Attempts

Instructors can allow Students Multiple Attempts at the same assignment. The Instructor can grade each attempt individually. This promotes the learning process and allows Instructors to track progress.

+ Additional Attempts

Instructors have the ability to give specific Students an additional attempt at an assignment in order to accommodate extenuating circumstances.

+ Submission Field

Students have access to a submission field in addition to attachments to provide text and links to online documents and websites.

+ Submission History

The Submission History provides a quick recap of the submission content, feedback, comments, grades and participants of each submission. This allows Students to see what they have completed and allows Instructors to view the progress made throughout the lifecycle of the assignment.

+ Release Assignments to Groups

The Assignments feature has been expanded to Groups so that a set of Students can work together on one deliverable.

+ Group Grades

If a Group completes an Assignment, the Instructor can grade one Student's submission and submit the same grade to all Students within the Group. The Instructor also has the ability to provide each Student an individual grade overriding the group grade.

Feature Loss

- Digital Drop Box

The functions of the new Assignment tool made the Digital Drop Box obsolete. The workflows in the new Assignment tool enable users to accomplish the same tasks as the Digital Drop Box.

The existing Digital Dropbox content remains accessible via a URL. The URL opens a window (login may be necessary) with a list of all the Courses that contain Dropbox files for that user. The download interface does not provide any data about who sent the file and when, it is purely a place to get the files from before they are recycled. The window has no navigation points to the rest of Blackboard Learn. The Course hyperlinks all of the files for that Course will be displayed and can be downloaded individually.

The URL to access these files is

<http://<hostname>/webapps/blackboard/execute/ddb> (where the <hostname> is specific to the Institution). This is not a file system location. The URL must be accessed via a web browser.

For more information about retrieving legacy files, please visit

<http://kb.blackboard.com/display/KB/Blackboard+Learn+Release+9+and+the+Digital+Dropbox>.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where does this feature appear?

Assignments can be added to any content page within Courses and organizations.

Are there any changes to existing workflows?

Yes. Previously, Academic Suite users would simply submit their assignment and then wait for their feedback and grade from their Instructor. Now Students can submit their assignments multiple times or receive an additional attempt to submit before receiving their final grade. Likewise, Instructors can provide a grade and feedback for each attempt of a single assignment, rather than simply grading the individual submission for an assignment.

Group Assignments also provide a new workflow. Only one Student within the group has to submit the assignment for the whole group and similarly the Instructor has to submit only one grade for the group, which is given automatically to all of the members in the group. The Instructor does have the option to override individual grades.

Where is the Digital Dropbox?

The Digital Dropbox does not appear in Release 9.1. The Assignments tool now provides a significantly improved submission workflow.

Blackboard Connect Integration

Clients who have licensed both Blackboard Learn and Blackboard Connect can now integrate the two products. This integration includes the following features:

- The ability to “push” user data from Blackboard Learn into a new Blackboard Connect installation.
- The ability for Blackboard Learn system administrators to send System Announcements by SMS text message or text-to-voice phone calls through Blackboard Connect.
- The ability for Blackboard Learn users to receive Notifications (the same kind of Notifications supported in 9.0 through email or the Learn web interface) by via SMS text message or text-to-voice phone calls through Blackboard Connect. Users still have the ability to select which types of Notifications they will receive and through what media (web, email, SMS, voice call).

For more information about Blackboard Connect, see the Blackboard Connect documentation available on [Behind the Blackboard](#) or contact your Blackboard Client Manager.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

Yes. Clients must license both Blackboard Learn Enterprise Edition and Blackboard Connect.

Where does this feature appear?

If the integration is enabled, the Announcements page accessed through the Administrator Panel is updated to reflect the additional SMS and text-to-voice options. The Notifications Settings page will display two additional columns (SMS and Voice) in addition to the existing columns (Web and Email) for users to select the mode for Notifications.

Did this feature change any existing workflows?

The SMS and text-to-voice options are simply additional options available to System Administrators when creating System Announcements and Notifications.

Is the integration automatic?

No. The integration must be activated for the client by the Blackboard Connect Client Care team in the Blackboard Connect central service. Once enabled, the System Administrator has to enable the Blackboard Connect proxy tool in Blackboard Learn.

At that point, the data between the two systems needs to be synchronized. If it is a new Blackboard Connect implementation, the Blackboard Learn System Administrator can “push” the user data from Blackboard Learn into Blackboard Connect. However, if there is an existing Blackboard Connect installation on campus or if the campus wants to use a system other than Blackboard Learn as the data source for Blackboard Connect, additional services work may be required.

At what phone number will the users receive the SMS messages or voice calls?

How the phone number is configured will vary from institution to institution. The phone number needs to be a part of the Blackboard user record (most likely using the existing fields in Personal Information), but there is no requirement that the phone number fields be managed through Blackboard Learn. As an alternate example, the phone numbers could be populated into Blackboard Learn through an SIS (Student information system).

What if Students do not want to receive SMS messages or voice calls from Blackboard Learn?

Users must explicitly indicate that they want to receive Notifications (and Announcements) in these modes.

Blogs and Journals

Blogs and Journals are new features for Academic Suite clients. Blogs are an effective means of sharing knowledge and materials created and collected by the group with the rest of the Course.

Blogs and Journals provide Students and Instructors with a social learning tool for expressing their thoughts and reflecting on their learning, either privately (with the Instructor) or publicly (with others in the Course). These tools empower all Course users to create and share ideas, while Instructors maintain the ability to edit or remove any inappropriate material.

Multiple blog types, including Course, group and individual blogs are available. Instructors can assign a journal to each user in a Course or Course group that is accessible by only the user and the Instructor. Journal entries can also be made available to the rest of the users in a Course. Faculty needs to be educated on the new tool and best practices.

Journals

Individual Journals allow Students to record their Course experiences and what they are learning. These thoughts can be a private communication between a Student and the Instructor or shared with everyone in the Course. Journal entries can be commented on by the author and the Instructor. Others are able to read public Journals, but they cannot comment on them.

Group Journals allow groups of Students to reflect collaboratively on their Course work and comment on their fellow group members' findings. To maintain privacy, Journal entries may be added anonymously by group members.

Blogs

Individual Blogs provide each Student with his or her own area to publicly share thoughts and work with others in the Course and to receive comments and feedback on entries. Avatars added by Students will be displayed in their public space to help personalize the page.

Course Blogs allow all users in the Course to share their thoughts and work in one common area that everyone can read and comment on. All entries are posted to the same page to help promote collaboration among all Course members. Users can add entries and comment on entries anonymously to maintain privacy.

Group Blogs allow groups of Students to collaboratively post thoughts and comment on each others' work while all other users in the Course can view and comment on their entry.

In each of these cases, users create entries, which are added to their Blog or Journal. The entries can be saved as drafts or published and then edited later. When entries are added to the Blog or Journal, they are added automatically to an index organized by date. A "New" indicator is displayed on entries and comments that the user has not yet displayed. Entries also can be marked as "New" again to create a reminder.

Grading Blogs and Journals

Instructors can enter grades for Blogs and Journals for individuals and for Groups within the Blog and Journal areas without having to navigate to the Grade Center, or they can enter them directly in the Grade Center. This enables Instructors to enter grades within the Blog or Journal so that the grading process is completed in context. All grade entries made within the Blog and Journal areas are automatically added to the Grade Center.

In addition to entering a grade, Instructors can enter grading notes and submit feedback to the Student. The grade and Instructor feedback is visible to Students, but the grading notes are not visible. For Group Blogs, Instructors can assign a Group-wide grade that applies to all Group members or assign individual grades for each Student. Instructors also have the flexibility to override the Group grade for particular Students.

Students can view their grades for Blogs and Journals within the Blog and Journal areas or in My Grades. Students will see their grade as well as any feedback provided by the Instructor.

This feature appears along the right hand margin of the Blog or Journal in the About this Journal or About this Blog section under the Student's name. Instructors can also grade Blogs or Journals from the Grade Center. Instructors will be able to set a Blog or Journal as gradable on the Create or Edit Blogs or Journals pages, which are accessed from the Control Panel by clicking **Course Tools** and then **Blogs** or **Journals**.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where do these features appear?

Blogs and Journals exist as tools within the Course environment. Instructors can access them from the Control Panel under **Tools**. Instructors can provide access to Students through tool links on content pages, the Menu, and the Tools page. Students access Group Blogs and Journals from within a Group space.

What is the difference between a Blog and a Journal?

A Journal is an on-going reflection or record of events by an individual or set of individuals. A Blog is a commentary by an individual or set of individuals that is for public consumption and comment.

Can I make Blogs and Journals public?

No. The privacy of Students' Course work needs to be respected. Opening these tools to the outside world may violate privacy laws.

Can Instructors grade individual Blog and Journal entries?

No. Blogs and Journals are only gradable in Release 9.1 as a single grade per Student as opposed to an individual grade for each entry.

Branding and Customization

Institutions will enjoy numerous customization options available to a larger user community alongside an improved user experience. Administrators should consider the Institution's need and best practices when using these features.

Single Login Page

In response to client feedback from current administrators of all products, we have made improvements to the user experience on entry to the Blackboard Learn software. Administrators can choose whether users begin on a gateway page that includes the login form, or directly on the My Institution tab that includes a login module. Administrators can publish system announcements directly to the gateway page using familiar announcements tools, and Enterprise Edition clients can customize it extensively using a simple template.

Brand Customization

Release 9.1 provides an extensive set of user interface themes that can change the entire look and feel of the system. The Blackboard default theme uses modern rounded edges and a soft blue and yellow color scheme. To help ease the transition to Release 9.1, themes inspired by each of the legacy LMS products (CE 4, CE 8, Vista 8, and Academic Suite 8) are available, as well as a Schoolhouse theme designed to appeal to younger learners and a Brushed Metal theme with clean lines, drop shadow, and neutral colors.

Fifteen separate color palettes will also ship with Release 9.1, each of which can be overlaid on top of any theme to change the set of colors used throughout the system.

For clients who want even more flexibility, the colors of the most common interface elements can be customized individually beyond the color palette offerings. For example, an administrator can set the button color throughout the system to an institution-defined value.

Release 9.1 also allows Enterprise Edition clients with technical expertise to download and customize the entire package of style sheets for each theme, or the single style sheet for all colors in the color palette, and upload those changes for use on their system.

Institutions will enjoy a large number of new customization options available to the larger user community alongside an improved user experience. Administrators should consider their specific institution's needs and best practices when using these features.

Feature Enhancement

+ Simple Upload/Download Template for Login

Administrators will be able to use a simple upload/download template mechanism for customizing the login page using a single template. This new process allows them to use simple HTML tags in a single template file to tailor the look and feel. Please speak to your client manager about licensing at the Enterprise level to gain access to this feature.

+ User Login Directly from First Loaded Page

All users will be able to log in from the first page. A gateway page is not needed.

+ **Post Announcements directly to the Login Page**

Administrators can create HTML or text announcements posted to the login page directly from the Announcements tool. This will ensure that users see the most important information even before logging in. Note that the tool used to customize the information on the login page may be used without changing the template.

+ **Themes and Color Palettes**

Administrators can apply themes and color palettes to the entire system, including a “Blackboard Classic” theme, inspired by Release 8. Applying a look and feel is useful for easing retraining anxiety or for creating a bold new look.

+ **Customize individual Colors**

Custom individual colors in common use throughout the system can be changed using the standard color picker. For example, the Administrator could match the tabs to the rest of their institutional design. This enables institutions to customize the interface to match ‘corporate’ branding.

+ **Modify the Cascading Style Sheet (CSS)**

Staff with technical expertise can fully customize all aspects of the user interface with downloadable CSS themes through the Theme and Palette library tool. Please speak to your client manager about licensing at the Enterprise level to gain access to this feature.

+ **Color Picker**

A new more accessible color picker is used throughout the system that allows users to select any color and uses color names and hexadecimal codes to identify colors in use.

+ **Translation**

Great Britain English, Finnish, Swedish, and Russian Language Packs, will be available with Learn 9.1.

Feature Loss

– **Login Page Customizations**

Existing customizations to the login template may need to be re-applied. The tags used in the login template in prior releases of Blackboard Learn have been superseded, so some customizations may need to be re-done.

– **Numerous Changes to Text**

A lot of text throughout the system has been modified which will require updates to existing customizations.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

Yes. All licenses will have the ability to choose a single theme and palette and set individual color settings to be shared by all users.

The following features are available only with the Enterprise Edition:

- Customize the login page.
- Download and upload custom themes and color palettes requires an Enterprise Edition license.

The following features are available only when the community engagement capabilities have been licensed:

- Customize a portion of the login page differently for different hostnames (for example, **bizschool.myinst.edu**).
- Create Tab Groups to organize related content.
- Associate different themes, palettes, and settings with different host names or user communities.

For more information, see [Community Engagement Features](#).

Where do these features appear?

Feature	Location
Tabs	On the Administrator Panel, under Communities , click Tabs and Modules . On the Tabs and Modules page, click Tabs .
Login Page	On the Administrator Panel, under Communities , click Brands and Themes . On the Brands and Themes page, click Customize Login Page .
Themes	On the Administrator Panel, under Communities , click Brands and Themes .
Gateway Page	On the Administrator Panel, under Security , click Gateway Options .
Announcements	On the Administrator Panel, under Tools and Utilities , click Announcements .
Themes	On the Administrator Panel, under Communities , click Brands and Themes .

Are there any changes to Existing Workflows?

- **Tabs and Modules > Tabs:** Available only if the community engagement capabilities have been licensed. The Tabs inventory list contains one row for each tab on the system, and can be used by administrators with tab management privilege, including any domain administrators with management privilege for a subset of tabs, to manage default layout, content, personalization and other settings of the tab. Controlling visibility, position order and membership of a tab within a tab group moves to the new Tab Group manager tool, which is controlled by a separate entitlement. Clients with the community engagement capabilities will see no change in existing tab management capability.

- **Tab Menu Column:** The Release 8 tab layout options included the ability to manage a menu column on the left with a fixed set of possible menu modules with a separate color scheme theme, and a one-column or two-column layout of modules. The Release 9.1 tab layout options allow one-column, two-column or three-column layouts of modules, all of which use the same theme. The Tool Panel, Sponsorships, Course Search, Organization Search and Hot Links menu areas have been converted to modules, and can be managed from the Administrator Panel under **Communities** by clicking **Tabs and Modules** and then **Modules**. The contents of these modules continue to be managed from the Administrator Panel under **Communities** by clicking **Tabs and Modules** and then **Tabs**. In upgrading from Release 8, the existing menu modules will still appear on the same tabs and in the same position in the layout where they did, but they will adopt the theme of the rest of the modules on the page, and, if the tab can be personalized, they will be repositionable as the other modules on the page via drag and drop.
- **Manage Brands > Tab Rounding:** Changes to the HTML in the top frame (to facilitate accessibility and customization) led to support for tab rounding only with Firefox and Safari browsers. IE browser users will always see square tabs. Custom colors and themes will be available to all users.
- **Brand Management:** The number of interface settings that can be customized for a brand has been dramatically increased in Release 9. These customizations have been bundled into “themes,” or packages of style and layout directives, similar to the Language Packs. A theme can be associated to the default brand, or for clients who license the community engagement capabilities, to any brand on the system. Within a theme, the color palette has been extracted and can also be associated to a brand, either in lock-step with the theme, or independently. The available palettes roughly correspond to the module colors available when customizing or personalizing a module tab, but they encompass many more colors on the system. Even beyond the theme and color palette, some individual colors and navigation settings can be set for a specific brand, including all of the top frame settings that were previously settable per-brand, and a few more besides. All choices may be previewed within the new Brands and Themes tool before being applied to the system. Existing brands are set to the Blackboard default theme on upgrade.
- **Login Template:** The default login page template and the login tag syntax have changed in Release 9.1. It is possible that some login template customizations will need to be redone for Release 9.1. Both brand-specific customizations that formerly resided on the gateway page and system-specific login template changes will be feasible in Release 9.1.

Do I Have to Know CSS to Customize Blackboard Learn?

No. Administrators who are comfortable with the Blackboard Learn interface can use the theme and palette library that ships with Release 9.1 to choose one of more than 100 combinations of theme and color palette for their system. If the community engagement capabilities have been licensed, Administrators can apply distinct combinations to any campus community they choose, by institution role, hostname, or both. Furthermore, with the new Blackboard Learn color picker, more than 16 million color choices are available for any of the 21 commonly used color elements in the system.

Calendar

The function of the Calendar is the same as the previous release of the product. All users will enjoy an improved user experience.

Feature Enhancement

+ Duration of Activity Displayed on Calendar

The duration of activities is displayed on the Calendar, which allows for easier planning and enables users to view overlaps and conflicts between entries.

Course Customizations

Direct Access to Course Management Tools

All Course management tools will be immediately available upon Course access for Instructors, teaching assistants, and other users with the appropriate entitlements. Course management tools in the Control Panel and Course content editing capabilities have been organized into common tasks.

Instructors will have direct access to edit and organize their Course Menu. They also have the ability to add content areas, tool links, sub-headers, and visual separators to the menu. The ability to rearrange the order of menu items using drag and drop or a keyboard accessible method of organization is also included. More intelligent handling of empty content areas, such as hiding them from the Student's view of the Course if they do not contain at least one piece of content, will keep the Course clean and organized.

Multiple Methods of Content Presentation

Course Module pages can be added to a Course to provide easy access to a variety of information. By default a Course homepage will be created that contains modules such as "Course Announcements," "What's New," "Calendar," and "Tasks." Any community engagement module can be displayed within a Course by the system administrator. Modules that typically display roll up information (Announcements, Tasks, What's New and so forth) will only display content relevant to the Course when displayed on a Course module page. Any module which can be displayed within a Course can also be added to a group home page and will further filter the display to reflect information applicable to the specific group. The Instructor will have the option to allow the individual user to personalize Course module pages giving them the ability to add additional content at their own discretion.

The content layout options previously available in all Learning System products as well as a new layout option will be available:

- Icon Only (Vista 8 and CE 8)
- Icon with Text (Legacy Academic Suite)
- Text Only (new)

Instructors can make use of all three layout options within a Course to ensure the content for any given area is being presented in the most appropriate manner for their users. Content in all layouts can be repositioned using drag and drop or using a keyboard accessible method.

Increased Options for Course Design and Style

Instructors will have the ability to design and style their Course to reflect the individual needs of their subject and material:

- Select the menu color and style of the Course menu (including the option to use text or buttons to represent individual items).
- Create a customized page banner (using the Text Editor).
- Select the color scheme displayed on each Course module page.
- Upload a Course banner image to be displayed on the page designated as the "Course Entry Point."

All of these options provide the Instructor with added flexibility to determine the presentation of their Course.

Simplified Tool Management

Instructors can manage the availability of all Course tools in a single interface. They will have full control over how tools are presented to users. Tools can be added as direct links on the Course menu, embedded in line with other Course content or made available on a central Tools page for easy access.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on license?

A core set of Blackboard modules (including Announcements, Calendar, Tasks, What's New, Needs Attention, To Do List, and Alerts) will be available for inclusion on Course module pages. Clients who have licensed the community engagement capabilities will also have the increased ability to make any module available for display within a Course.

Are there changes to any existing workflows?

Default Course and organization menu for new Courses: The default menu for new Courses has been changed, based on client feedback and best practices from across the client base. Menus in Release 9.1 will support dividers and subheadings. Existing Course menus will not be changed on upgrade and all color and styles choices will be maintained. Default menu customizations made by system administrators in Release 8 will be logged during update so that they can be manually restored if necessary. This includes the default text and background colors on the menu.

New organization and placement of the Control Panel: The Control Panel is now available to Instructors and other privileged Course users on any Course page, as a menu below the navigation area, rather than as a standalone page. It has also been reorganized to more clearly group tasks related to building out, designing or customizing a Course, as distinct from tasks related to teaching or administering a Course.

New user enrollment tool within a Course: User management (previously controlled from multiple pages) has been simplified into a single, easy to use interface allowing Instructors and other privileged users to quickly and efficiently enroll users, manage their Course permissions and remove users from the Course list.

Observer access to Course tools: Observers will still have access to the Calendar Items, Tasks, and Grades of the user they are observing. The dedicated Observer Tools landing page will no longer be available - observer users will access the tools either from the main tools page (if enabled) or directly from the Course menu, just as Student users do.

What do Administrators need to know about Course Modules?

Any system module can be made available for display in Courses and organizations. If the module shows roll up information when displayed on a tab it will be filtered to display information specific to the Course or organization when viewed in that context. Permission to view modules is still controlled by institution role so modules which have limited access (such as Faculty only) will only display to users with the selected institution role(s) even when viewed in Courses or organizations.

Course Files

Using Course Files for Basic Content Management

The new Course Files feature provides basic content management features and functions within a Course as a core part of the Course delivery capabilities of Blackboard Learn. These features and functions were previously available only to clients who licensed the content management capabilities.

Instructors will have the ability to more effectively use (and reuse) content stored in Course Files (or in the Content Collection if the content management capabilities have been licensed) when building a Course without any significant impact on their customary workflows and practices. New capabilities for uploading, managing, and using content in a Course are available to support Instructors when using the Course Files feature or the Content Collection.

In previous versions of Blackboard Learn, when an Instructor attached a file to a Course content item, that file would be placed in a “hidden” file system on the Blackboard server where it was invisible to the Instructor. Blackboard Learn now provides a Course Files area that allows Instructors or any user with an appropriate Course-authoring role to view and manage all files related to their Course content.

Attaching Files to Course Content and for Re-Using Files

The current process for attaching files to Course content remains basically the same, but with a few important additions that Instructors should note:

- When attaching a file, an Instructor can select a file from the local computer or the Course Files area of their Course. If the content management capabilities have been licensed, an Instructor can select a file from any available Content Collection.
- Instead of attached files being stored in a “hidden” file system, files attached from the local computer are uploaded automatically into the Course Files area. If the content management capabilities have been licensed, attached files can be placed in any available Content Collection. This allows Instructors to see, manage, and re-use the files in other parts of their Course. An Instructor can now upload a file once and use it in multiple areas of the Course.
- When attaching files to content items, Instructors can select multiple files from multiple folders in the Course Files area. If the content management capabilities have been licensed, Instructors also can select multiple files from any available Content Collection.
- Because a file may be re-used in a Course (or across Courses if the content management capabilities have been licensed), the new 360° View lets the Instructor see all of the places that any given file has been used as well as the full path in the Course to that content item.
- The organization of files in Course Files has no impact on how they appear when linked to from a Course.
- A link to a file can be included in one or more areas in a Course.
- When a link to a file in Course Files is deleted from a Course, the file is not deleted.
- When a file in Course Files is renamed or moved, any links to the file will remain intact.
- Files uploaded by Students are not automatically added to Course Files.

Uploading Files

In addition to adding files by attaching them directly to Course content items, Instructors can upload files directly to Course Files or to any available Content Collection if the content management capabilities have been licensed.

Instructors can upload a single file from the local computer using Browse, or they can upload multiple files or entire folders from the local computer using Browse or by dragging the items from the desktop to the interface. Instructors can also upload a package of HTML files to be unpacked automatically into Course Files.

Managing HTML

In Blackboard Learn, an HTML Object (formerly known as a “Snippet” in the Content Collection) is an HTML file created in Blackboard Learn that has some additional, Blackboard-specific properties associated with it.

Instructors can create HTML Objects in two ways:

- The **Create HTML Object** action in Course Files (or the **Build > HTML Object** action if the content management capabilities have been licensed) will bring up a WYSIWYG editor that allows the Instructor to create an HTML file.
- The **Save as HTML Object** option in the WYSIWYG editor of content items or folders will allow the content that is created in the WYSIWYG editor to be saved to Course Files as an HTML file for re-use.

If the content management capabilities have been licensed, the **Save as Reusable Object** option that appears in every WYSIWYG editor allows the same capability, but for many more types of content. The Content Collection also has a **Discover Content** capability that allows for the discovery of HTML Objects and other types of Reusable Objects.

HTML files, whether uploaded or created as HTML Objects, are presented more effectively in Release 9.1. If an HTML file is linked to from within a Course or from the Table of Contents for a Learning Module, when a user clicks on the HTML file it will be displayed inline inside of the Blackboard Learn interface, instead of opened separately.

Viewing Images as Thumbnails

In Course Files (and the Content Collection if the content management capabilities have been licensed), users can switch between **View List**, which lists the files in a directory, and the new **View Thumbnails**, which shows a resizable thumbnail of image files. All non-image files will display the appropriate icon for the file type.

Course Files with the Content Collection

For clients who have licensed the content management capabilities, Course Files fully integrates individual Course content with the Content Collection. Course Files encourages the sharing and reuse of content by allowing users to access and manage all of their files in the Content Collection from within a Course and across Courses. The additional features available include:

- Cross-Course sharing of content
- Institutional content repositories
- Personal content repositories

- Reusable Objects
- Metadata for content
- Version control
- File locking
- Tracking user interaction with an item
- Sharing of comments
- Advanced search function
- Permissions and passes control
- e-reserves
- e-portfolios
- Portfolios
- Integration with the outcomes assessment capabilities

In addition, administrators can change the default directory for an individual Course by clicking **Properties** under **Customization** in the Course Control Panel. Administrators can also change the default directory for an individual Course or multiple Courses using a command line tool.

If a client who licenses only the course delivery capabilities later decides to license the content management capabilities, the Course Files feature will integrate seamlessly with the Content Collection.

For more information, see the Course Files topics and Content Management topics in [Blackboard Help](#) or contact your Blackboard Client Manager.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

No.

Where does this feature appear?

For clients who have not licensed the content management capabilities, Instructors or other users with the appropriate Course role can access the Course Files area by clicking **Files** in the Control Panel on the left side of the screen. Clicking on a directory in the Files panel displays its contents (files and folders) in the right-hand content panel of the Course environment.

For clients who have licensed the content management capabilities, users will see the traditional Content Collection view that displays all available Course Files and content management functionality, including individual Course Content (which is equivalent to the content on the **Files** panel seen by users who have not licensed the content management capabilities), My Content, All Courses Content, All Organizations Content, and Institution Content.

For all clients, Course Files can also be accessed when attaching files to a content item. The **Browse My Computer** button, which allows the user to browse their local computer for files, is now accompanied by a **Browse Course Files** button to select files from Course Files (or any Content Collection if the content management capabilities have been licensed). The **Browse Course Files** button brings up the Course Files interface in a pop-up window for file selection.

Did this feature change any existing workflows?

Yes, there are several workflow changes.

Attached Files Location: Prior to Release 9.1, for clients who had not licensed the content management capabilities, the only way to add a file to a Course was to upload that file from the local computer and attach that file to a content item (or question or forum post, and so on). When an Instructor took that action, the attached file was placed in a “hidden” files system within Blackboard Learn. Although the workflow for uploading that file from the desktop remains the same, all files uploaded by an Instructor will be placed automatically in Course Files.

Selecting Files: For all clients, the workflow for attaching files now allows users to:

- Select items to attach from the local computer or from the Course Files area (or Content Collections if the content management capabilities have been licensed).
- Select multiple files from multiple directories (or multiple Content Collections if the content management capabilities have been licensed) without having to attach each file separately.

Unpackaging Files: Prior to Release 9.1, if an Instructor had created a website to add to a Course, the Instructor would have to 1) make sure that the website used relative links, 2) zip up the files, 3) attach the zip file to a content item, 4) unpack the files to the “hidden” file system, and then 5) select a launch page. If the Instructor wanted to edit that website, the previous attachment had to be deleted and the entire process repeated.

With Release 9.1, this approach has been streamlined. Instructors 1) upload a zip package directly to Course Files, 2) unzip it, and then 3) create a link from the content item to the index page in Course Files. If the Instructor wants to make a change to the site, the affected files can be edited and uploaded to Course Files individually.

What's the difference between Course Files and the Content Collection?

Course Files is available to all Blackboard Learn clients and provides basic file management capabilities within a Course. In short, Course Files does not change a lot about what you can do with uploaded files in a Blackboard Learn Course, but it changes how you do those things by providing more control and management capabilities to the Instructor.

The content management capabilities provide a much wider array of content management capabilities within the Course and across the institution.

What happens to content created in a previous release of Academic Suite or Blackboard Learn when we upgrade?

By default, when an earlier version of Academic Suite or Blackboard Learn is upgraded to Release 9.1, nothing changes. For existing Courses, the files used in the Course will still be stored in the existing, hidden server-side file system that is not visible or exposed to Instructors. Any new files added to an existing Course will be added to Course Files. For new Courses created after the upgrade, all files will be added to Course Files.

Release 9.1 provides tools to move files from the old, hidden file system to Course Files. If Instructors will be recreating their Course content, the content does not need to be moved. If Instructors will be reusing their Course content from the earlier version, the content should be moved.

Administrators and Instructors can move content for an individual Course using the user interface. Only Administrators can move the Content for multiple Courses using the command line. For more information, see the Course Files topics in [Blackboard Help](#).

What happens with content added to Course Files if we upgrade our Blackboard Learn system to include the Content Collection?

If a client licenses only the Course delivery capabilities and later adds the content management capabilities, no additional action is necessary to continue using Course Files. Because Course Files is built on the same underlying file storage system as the Content Collection, the Course Files directory and a Course's Content Collection are one and the same. The Instructor will now be able to take advantage of the full Content Collection view and the expanded Files panel (described above).

Can you set a default “landing” directory for the file picker when launched from Course Files?

No. The file picker defaults to the current Course Files directory.

If the content management capabilities have been licensed, administrators can change the default directory for an individual Course by clicking **Properties** under **Customization** in the Course Control Panel. Administrators can also change the default directory for an individual Course or multiple Courses using a command line tool.

Course Navigation and Content

All users will enjoy an enhanced Course navigation experience as well as a number of content enhancements. Before using the new Course environment, faculty will need to be educated on the functions and best practices of the following features.

Feature Enhancement

+ Easily Accessible Control Panel

All options in the Control Panel are now available from the main Course menu. Instructors no longer have to navigate to a separate area of the Course to access these options.

+ Presentation Options

Items in specific content areas can be displayed in “Icon View”, “Icon with Text” or “Text Only” for increased flexibility in Course creation. This increased flexibility for content presentation allows Instructors to build Course content areas that suit their unique pedagogical needs.

+ In-line Add, Edit, and Drag and Drop

In-line actions and drag and drop results in quicker Course Menu set up and management. Instructors no longer have to navigate to multiple areas of the Course to access these controls and they can complete each action with fewer clicks.

+ Display of Tool Links is not dependent on Tool Availability

Tool availability is no longer linked to the display of tool links in Course content areas, on tools page or in the Course menu. Available tools can be displayed in a content area, on the tools page, in the Course menu or in any combination of the three options. The display of the link to Instructors (in the Edit – ON view) is independent of the availability of the tool.

+ Course Module Pages

Course module pages provide the Instructor with another way to present Course related information to Students. When building or updating a Course Instructors should keep in mind this new page type, the kind of material that can be added to it and the personalization options available for Students if they enable it.

+ Reorganization of Course Management Actions

Course Management features, such as the Control Panel and action bars, have been re-organized to align with the day-to-day tasks performed by Instructors, increasing efficiency and becoming more task-appropriate.

+ Edit Mode for Additional Tools

Edit Mode now provides the Instructor with access to management capabilities for additional tools such as the discussion board, calendar and announcements rather than requiring them to go to the Control Panel.

+ Hidden Content Areas

Empty content areas will be hidden from the Student view of a Course, which allows the Instructor to build out the Course content while only displaying areas that contain information pertinent to Students. Students will not waste time clicking on empty folders to see if it contains content.

+ Dividers and Sub-Headers

Instructors now have additional organizational elements in the Course menu that enable easy restructuring of the menu in a way that matches the presentation of the Course material.

+ Notifications

Notifications enable users to access content that is new or that they need to take action on. Users view this information and can access the content directly from the Notifications module within a Course, through email, and if the community engagement capabilities have been licensed, from the Notifications Dashboard.

+ Tools Panel

There is no longer a separate Tools panel in the Course Menu. “Course Tools” and “Communication Tools” have been combined into a single Tools area that appears within the default Course Menu. This enables faculty to have more flexibility over tool management and presentation of tools in the Course menu than previously available.

+ Tool Management

Tool management for content tools, communication tools, and building block tools has been combined into a single interface. This will improve Instructor efficiency because all the tools can be managed from a single, easy to use area.

+ Upload Content Using New Content Types

Multiple content types provide Instructors with extended flexibility when building and structuring content within a Course. Instructors can add different types of content to a Course, including videos and images as well as packaged content, such as IMS and SCORM. Instructors also have numerous options for organizing this content, such as Content Folders, Lesson Plans, and Learning Modules.

Several content types for uploading content to an area within a Course have been changed or added:

- **Audio:** This new content type provides a separate method of adding an audio file. This content type includes fields for accessibility.
- **Image:** This content type was available in Release 9.0, but the user interface for adding this type of file has changed.
- **Video:** This new content type provides a separate method of adding a video file. This content type includes fields for accessibility.
- **URL:** This content type was available in Release 9.0, but the previous name “External Link” has been changed to “URL.”
- **Learning Module:** This content type was available in Release 9.0, but it has changed to include a hierarchical Table of Contents. For more information, see [Learning Modules](#).
- **Lesson Plan:** This new content type provides a new type of content container (similar to a folder) that has a tabbed format to add different content items. This feature is designed to allow Students to view content with a lesson profile and instructional objectives. For more information, see the appropriate section for your license: [Lesson Plans for HigherEd and ProEd Clients](#) or [Lesson Plans for K-12 Clients](#).

- **Blank Page:** This new content type provides a method to add an HTML page to a Content Area or the Course Menu.
- **Mashups:** This new content type enables Enterprise Edition clients to pull data from the following third-party application content into Blackboard Learn: YouTube videos, SlideShare presentations, and Flickr photos. For more information, see [Mashups](#).

The available content types are listed in the Build area of the Action Bar when uploading content to an area within a Course.

Feature Loss

– Offline Content

Offline Content can no longer be added to a Course. The Offline content type will no longer be available when uploading content.

Course/Organization Role Customization

Creating Custom Course/Organization Roles

Administrators can now create custom Course/Organization roles based on the standard Course/Organization Roles that ship with Blackboard Learn. Standard and custom roles can be made available to specific Courses and with special privileges. Custom roles inherit their parent role privileges by default, but these privileges can be changed.

Administrators can permit or restrict the more than 100 privileges available for standard or custom roles to best fit the needs of their institutions. As a result, users will have more granular permissions that align more closely with what they are expected to do in Blackboard Learn.

This flexibility focuses on separating Course design privileges from teaching privileges. This is particularly important to institutions that have strict expectations about the responsibilities of different types of faculty and staff. For example, some institutions designate a set of users as designers who are responsible for creating Course templates. The Courses are then passed to another set of users whose sole purpose is to teach the Course. This capability enables such institutions to enforce this separation of responsibilities. These privileges may, for example, allow a school to create a Manager role that is available only in organizations and has fewer privileges than an Instructor in a Course as well as an Assistant role that has no privileges to add or delete content in Course.

The Snapshot tool and the Batch and GUI enrollment tools fully support custom roles.

Custom Course/Organization Roles with Community Engagement

If the community engagement capabilities have been licensed, standard and custom roles can be made available separately to specific organizations. This allows an institution to treat Courses and the relationship among their enrolled users differently than those in organizations.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

Yes. Enterprise Edition clients have no restrictions for this feature. Basic Edition clients can review available privileges, but they cannot create custom roles or grant or revoke privileges.

Where does this feature appear?

Administrators can configure these roles from the Administrator Panel under **Users** by clicking **Course/Organization Roles**. Roles that can be copied to create new roles will have a **Copy** option in the role's contextual menu.

Privileges can be added from the Administrator Panel under **Users** by clicking **Course/Organization Roles** and then clicking **Privileges** in the contextual menu for the role.

Can all standard roles be used to create new roles?

The following are the default roles that can be copied to make new roles:

- Course Builder/Organization Builder
- Grader/Grader
- Instructor/Leader
- Teaching Assistant/Assistant

Can the privileges for all standard roles be changed?

No. The privileges for the Student and Guest roles cannot be changed.

How will the Quick Enroll capability be impacted?

The Quick Enroll capability will not be impacted by any new roles created. It will continue to function as before.

Are all privileges available to be added to Course and organization roles?

In this release, only a subset of privileges will be made available to be granted or revoked. The following are the product areas that are impacted:

- Course Content
- Course Files
- Adaptive Release
- Standards Alignments
- Discussion Board
- Groups
- Course Settings Management
- Course Tools

Privileges associated with the Grade Center have not been made flexible. Any access that the source role has to the Grade Center will be inherited by the derived role and cannot be changed.

How are System Roles impacted by the additional privileges?

System Roles can also be granted the new privileges that have been made available. This means that a given user with a System Role does not have to quick enroll into a Course to get the privileges of a particular Course role as long as they have been granted the corresponding privileges.

Can the same Course or organization role have different capabilities based on the Course or organization it is enrolled in?

No. Each Course or organization role has the same privileges regardless of which Course or organization they are enrolled in. An administrator would have to create as many unique custom roles (with their associated privileges) to cover all of the unique Course-level capabilities desired.

Discussions

The function of Discussions is the same as the previous release of the product. All users will enjoy an improved user experience.

Feature Enhancement

+ Notifications

Users may receive notifications of new Discussion Board posting activity. In-system notifications, such as in the What's New module, include links directly to the forum.

Email and Messages

The function of the Email and Messages tools are the same as the previous release of the product.

Feature Enhancement

+ External Emails for Observers

Instructors can select and send external emails to users with the Observer role. This allows them to communicate with Observers who are not logged in.

External Links

The function of External Links is the same as the previous release of the product. All users will enjoy an improved user experience.

Feature Enhancement

+ Add External Links to the Course Menu

Instructors can manage External Links that appear in the Course menu using inline options. They no longer have to navigate to a separate area.

Glossary

The function of the Glossary is the same as the previous release of the product. All users will enjoy an improved user experience.

Feature Enhancement

+ Easier Glossary Entry

An improved workflow enables Instructors to add entries to the Glossary with more ease and fewer mouse clicks.

Grade Center – Instructor Views

The function of the Grade Center feature is the same as the previous release of the product, but a number of Grade Center enhancements have been included in Release 9.1.

Feature Enhancement

+ Grade Blogs and Journals

Journals and Blogs can now be graded for individuals and for Groups. For more information, see [Blogs and Journals](#).

+ Rubrics for Grading and Completing Assignments

Instructors can create a Rubric to provide guidelines for grading an item. Instructors can associate the Rubric to a grading column and view the Rubric while assigning a grade. The Rubric needs to include how many entries will be required, the minimum length of entries, and the grading criteria.

This feature is accessed through the Course Tools menu.

+ Anonymous Grading

Instructors can grade assignment and test attempts while information identifying the Student remains concealed. Only after the grade for the attempt has been submitted will the identity of the Student be exposed.

The objectives of grading anonymously include creating a grading workflow that is less prone to bias or favoritism on the part of the Instructor. It also serves as a protection for Instructors who may be subject to a complaint of unfair grading.

The Instructor will have the option of selecting to grade anonymously before beginning the grading process for the item. The order of the attempts is scrambled during the anonymous grading process to address scenarios where an Instructor may have a class somewhat memorized by alphabetic order.

This feature is accessed through the column contextual menu in the Grade Center. In addition, it can be activated when grading by test attempt as well as when grading by question.

+ Grade by Question Attempt

Question-by-question grading accommodates Instructors whose preferred workflow for assignments and assessments is to enter grades by question for all Students as opposed to by all questions by Student. For example, an Instructor may want to gain an overall feel for how the class has answered an essay question by moving through all of the Students' attempts at that question before moving to the next question. Question attempt grading also provides great efficiency for the grading process by enabling Instructors to immediately start grading without having to open each assessment or assignment.

This feature is accessed through the column contextual menu in Grade Center.

+ Smart Views

Instructors can use Smart Views to view specific information and data as desired in the Grade Center. The system views include viewing only Assignments, Assessments, Blogs, Discussion Boards, or Journals. These views can be customized so that Instructors may select criteria of categories, status types, or users.

Instructors can also create custom Smart Views with different variations on these configurations. Instructors can designate any system or custom Smart View as a favorite, which will result in it displaying in the Control Panel. By doing this, Instructors can directly access their preferred views from the Control Panel without having to enter the Grade Center and then select a Smart View. By default, Smart View favorites for Assignments and Tests are available on the Control Panel. In addition, the Full Grade Center is now accessible from the Control Panel.

Instructors can instantly manipulate the Grade Center grid display by selecting category and status filters that have been placed on the main Grade Center page. This feature enables Instructors to quickly view specific categories and status types, such as assignments that need to be graded, without having to configure a Smart View.

The Smart View feature is accessed in the Manage menu of the Grade Center. After Smart Views have been created and designated as favorites, they are accessible either through the Control Panel or in the Smart View list under the Manage menu. The Category and Status filters are located on the main page of the Grade Center.

+ Grade Center Row Display

The Grade Center structures itself automatically to the available browser space but the user can define a minimum number of rows to display regardless of browser size or screen resolution.

Feature Change

Action Bar Menu Items

Action Bar options have been re-organized to fall in line with the task oriented categorization of action bars across the system. Instructors should be informed of the changes to the action bar menu and the increases in efficiency gained by task oriented organization and naming standards.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

No.

Where do these features appear in the Product?

- **Rubrics for Grading:** This feature is accessed through the Course Tools menu.
- **Anonymous Grading:** This feature is accessed through the column contextual menu in the Grade Center. It also can be activated when grading attempts.
- **Grading by Question Attempt:** This feature is accessed through the column contextual menu in Grade Center.
- **Selectively View and Filter Grade Center:** The Smart View feature is accessed in the Manage menu of the Grade Center. After Smart Views have been created and designated as favorites, they are accessible either through the Control Panel or in the Smart View list under the Manage menu. The Category and Status filters are located on the main page of the Grade Center.

Grade Center – My Grades

The function of the My Grades feature is the same as the previous release of the product. Users should be made aware of the new notifications feature.

Feature Enhancement

+ Notifications of New Grades

Students will receive notifications of new or changed grades posted by the Instructor.

Groups

Collaboration through social interaction allows Students to share their personal experiences and understand those of others. Working with peers as a Group enhances Student motivation by increasing their personal involvement in the learning process. A Group area and Group tools provide the platform for this social interaction to take place.

The Group area provides Students with a forum to meet and connect with their peers, which they may not have in a large Course environment or through distance education. The Group tools allow Students to communicate and collaborate effectively. The customizable space provides Students with a sense of ownership within the Course. The new Group tools provide Instructors with more insight into individual Student participation within Group activities. These features will aid in creating problem-based learning exercises as well as developing constructivist learning environments.

The Group creation options are great time savers, allowing Instructors to easily create and enroll Students into any number of Groups at one time. Instructors also can empower Students to create their own Groups so that they can take advantage of the robust Group tools available in the absence of Instructor participation or if they wish to create their own study Groups.

What's New in this Release?

Instructors can create any number of Groups at once and provide default settings and description for each Group. Students can then be automatically enrolled in those Groups, manually enrolled at a later date, or asked to sign-up up for a Group themselves. These Groups then can be managed collectively or individually.

Group Members can access a customizable Group area where they will communicate and collaborate with their Group members using the Group tools available on the page. Group assignments and notifications will be listed within the modules provided, and Group material can be saved and authored collectively from this location. The Group area provides a one stop shop for Group work.

Group Tools: Group members can create their own Discussion Board forums that allow them to conduct ongoing conversations. Group members are able to Blog thoughts and ideas for the rest of the Course to comment on or add Journal entries for private reflection within the Group. Group members can create Tasks to track the progress of their deliverables. These tasks can be conducted and completed by any of the members in the Group.

Building Blocks can be Group aware and made available to Groups within their Group area.

Students can create their own Groups in the absence of Instructor participation to take advantage of the robust Group communication and collaboration tools provided. Students can provide a description of the Group and limit the number of Students able to enroll in the Group. Instructors always have the option of modifying or restricting access to Groups created by Students.

Instructors should be educated about the new features and best practices for using them in their Courses.

Feature Enhancement

+ Group Creation Options

There are more ways to create Groups with Release 9.1. Students can sign up for Groups they would like to join. Alternatively, Instructors can create sets of related Groups and manually enroll users or randomly distribute all Students amongst the Groups.

+ Student Created Groups

Students have the ability to create their own Groups that other Students can sign up for without any involvement by the Instructor.

+ Bulk Management of Groups

Instructors can manage Groups and their properties in bulk upon Group creation.

+ Quick Access to Group Areas

Students will have access to their Group area from the Groups palette in the Course Menu and the Notifications module.

+ Group Module Page

The Group area is a module page that provides access to new and existing Group modules. The page also allows Group members to add any additional modules that will help with Group work.

+ Customizable Group Area

Groups can customize their Group area to create their own space with its own look and feel.

+ Group Assignments

Instructors can create Assignments to be completed by an entire Group and then give one grade for the Group while still allowing individual grades to be overwritten. (See the Assignment feature for additional details).

+ Blogs and Journals

Groups can have their own Blog for the rest of the Course to view and comment on, or a Journal for private communication within the Group.

+ Tasks

Groups can create tasks to track the progress of the Group deliverables.

+ What's New Group Modules

Groups will have access to modules that provide Group specific data about new material and due dates.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where does this feature appear?

All Group areas can be accessed from a palette in the Course Menu. Each Group in which the Student is enrolled will be listed.

How can Students collectively author and submit an assignment?

If a Group member saves a file to the File Exchange tool within their Group area, each of the members will have access to that file. The Students then can use the communication tools to collaborate. The file then can be updated by any member of the Group until it is complete. A Group member then can attach the file to an Assignment and submit it. The submission will be associated automatically with each member of the Group.

What is the difference between a Group and a Group Set?

A Group is a collection of Students. A Group Set is a collection of Groups. Originally, all of the Groups within the Group Set will contain the same default settings and description. Groups within a Group Set can then be managed in bulk or modified individually to customize the settings or description for a specific Group.

Learning Modules

Learning Modules from Blackboard Learn Release 9.0 has been enhanced in Release 9.1 to incorporate the navigable table of contents available in Learning Modules in CE and Vista.

These enhancements help Instructors present material in a more meaningful and engaging way to keep Students organized and on track with Course materials. Release 9.1 provides enhanced capabilities for all user roles:

- **Faculty and Instructional Designers** will use Learning Modules to organize and present content to Students in their Blackboard Learn Courses. These enhancements will provide a way to select how material is presented and how Students proceed through the material in the most appropriate way for the content being used and how the Instructor plans to teach.
- **Students** will use Learning Modules to access Course content and navigate Learning Module content using the Table of Contents.

Feature Enhancement

+ Drag and Drop Reordering

Instructors can easily re-order content items and folders in a Learning Module using the drag and drop feature.

+ Table of Contents View

The Instructor can choose whether to present the content contained in the Learning Module in a hierarchical, outline-style format. Using this view, a Student will be able to navigate through the Learning Module in the manner prescribed by the Instructor. If the Table of Contents is selected, the Instructor can also select the numbering or lettering format to be used in the Table of Contents.

Instructors may create folders and sub-folders within Learning Modules and populate them with content. As the Learning Module is populated, the Table of Contents will be created accordingly and numbered or lettered automatically in the format selected by the Instructor. New content items in Release 9.1, such as Mashups and Lesson Plans, can be incorporated into Learning Modules.

The Table of Contents can be manipulated by Instructors and Students to accommodate individual viewing preferences. It can be minimized and oriented on the left side or along the bottom of the screen.

+ Content Folder Structure

Instructors may create folders and sub-folders within Learning Modules and populate them with content. As the Learning Module is populated, the Table of Contents will be created accordingly and numbered or lettered automatically in the format selected by the Instructor. New content items in Release 9.1, such as Mashups and Lesson Plans, can be incorporated into Learning Modules.

+ Sequential Navigation of Content

When an Instructor chooses sequential navigation, items in the Learning Module will become viewable as users progress through the content. Without sequential navigation, all content items in the Learning Module are viewable and users may navigate the content at will.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

No.

Where does this feature appear?

Instructors access Learning Modules from the Build action bar button as a content creation menu item.

Students access Learning Modules from Content Areas in the Course Menu.

Can Learning Modules contain Folders?

Yes. The only kind of content a Learning Module cannot contain is another Learning Module.

Can Learning Modules support direct file uploads?

Yes. You can upload individual files directly to Learning Modules and folders from the **Create File** and **Create Item** pages. To upload multiple files, you must use the **Create Item** page.

Lesson Plans for HigherEd and ProEd Clients

The Lesson Plan feature enables Instructors and Course designers to create a structured unit plan with distinct and customizable sections that provide a means of documenting information such as description, learning level, delivery instructions, and so on. Lesson Plans also include content designed for an individual unit using any type of content or tool enabled in the Course.

This feature will meet the challenge of developing unit plans and incorporating content in blended environments where classroom Instructors use Blackboard Learn as an instructional tool in the classroom as well as for online teaching. Another challenge that Instructors have is reducing the time spent planning and creating materials to focus on instructional activities. As a planning tool, the Lesson Plan feature will benefit Instructors who can centrally plan and consolidate materials and resources. Instructors will also have a streamlined means of selectively exposing information and resources to Students as part of the planning process.

Creating Customized Lesson Plans

Each section of a Lesson Plan can be individually renamed and reorganized however the Instructor wishes. There is a high degree of variation in institutions as to what information and details are required in Lesson Plans. The Lesson Plan feature has maximum flexibility to accommodate these variations.

Controlling Visibility

The Lesson Plan feature enables Instructors to select which Lesson Plan sections are visible to Students. This enables Instructors to include non-Student-facing instructional information (such as instructions for delivery in the classroom, comments, suggestions for use, and so on) in the Lesson Plan while also including Student-facing information (such as learning objectives, materials needed, Student team assignments, and so on). In effect, Lesson Plans provide a planning tool for Instructors and Course designers as well as a tool for organizing Student-facing instructional materials.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

No.

Where does this feature appear?

The user will be able to create a unit plan from any content area or content list page within a Course or an organization.

Can the administrator change the names of the lesson sections for all users?

It is expected that institutions may have specific terminology used in lesson plans and instructional materials. As with any text within Blackboard Learn, system administrators can use the language pack editor to change the pre-defined unit plan sections and provide Instructors familiar section titles. Changes made within the language pack will apply to all instances of the Lesson Plan feature. For more information about the language pack editor, see *Working with Language Packs* available on [Behind the Blackboard](#).

Can the administrator define templates for lessons?

Release 9.1 does not provide an explicit template tool as part of the Lesson Plan. However, Instructors or Course designers may create shells by constructing Lesson Plans with the appropriate sections, section titles, and organization, and then use the Course or item copy functionality to reuse the defined format and structure for additional Lesson Plans within this or other Courses. These pre-defined lesson plans could be included by default in a Course shell.

Can I copy a lesson?

Lesson plans, their included content items, and all standards alignments will be maintained during a full Course copy, Course archive, or Course export operation. In addition, Instructors can share individual or groups of Lesson Plans with colleagues. Although there is no explicit export feature for individual Lesson Plans, the Course export operation can be used to accomplish this task. To do so, create Content Areas containing one or more Lesson Plans, use the Course export operation to export those Content Areas, and then upload the resulting .ZIP packages into another Course or email the packages to other teachers with whom you want to share resources.

Content that is owned by the Lesson Plan as well as all standards alignments will be included in the export. Links to content not explicitly owned by the Lesson Plan (such as Assignments, Tests, Surveys, and content linked using Course links) will be included, but the original content items will not. If the referenced content items do not exist in the destination Course, the links will be broken and the content will need to be recreated.

Lesson Plans for K-12 Clients

The Lesson Plan feature enables teachers to create a structured lesson plan with distinct and customizable sections that provide a means of documenting information such as description, grade level, delivery instructions, and so on. Teachers may also incorporate any kind of content type or tool enabled in the Course within an individual lesson.

Developing Lesson Plans and integrating them into the instructional process has traditionally been a time consuming, paper-based exercise. The Lesson Plan feature will meet the challenge of developing Lesson Plans and incorporating content in blended environments where classroom teachers use Blackboard Learn as an instructional tool in the classroom as well as for online teaching. Another challenge teachers have is reducing the time spent planning and creating materials to focus on instructional activities. As a planning tool, the Lesson Plan feature will benefit teachers who can centrally plan and consolidate materials and resources. Teachers will also have a streamlined means of selectively exposing information and resources to Students as part of the planning process.

Creating Customized Lesson Plans

Each section of a Lesson Plan can be individually renamed and reorganized by the teacher. There is a high degree of discrepancy in schools, school districts, and states as to what information and details are required in lesson plans. The Lesson Plan feature has maximum flexibility to accommodate these variations.

Controlling Visibility

The Lesson Plan feature enables teachers to select which Lesson Plan sections are visible to Students. This provides a means for teachers to include non-Student-facing instructional information (such as instructions for delivery in the classroom, comments, suggestions for use, and so on) in the Lesson Plan while also including Student-facing information (such as learning objectives, materials needed, Student team assignments, and so on). In effect, the Lesson Plan feature provides a planning tool for teachers, curriculum specialists, and Course designers as well as a tool for organizing Student-facing lessons and instructional materials.

Aligning Content to Learning Standards

Lesson Plan content items may be aligned to learning standards. Content built inside the Lesson Plan can also be aligned to standards independently from the Lesson Plan. There is no correlation or transfer of standards alignment of the Lesson Plan and its content. Each must be individually aligned. For more information about Standards Alignment, see [Standards Alignment for K-12 Clients](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

Yes. Aligning content to learning standards requires a Blackboard Learn for K-12 license.

Where does this feature appear?

The user will be able to create a Lesson Plan from any content area or content list page within a Course or an organization.

Can the administrator change the names of the lesson sections for all users?

It is expected that school districts and institutions may have specific terminology used in Lesson Plans and instructional materials. As with any text within Blackboard Learn, system administrators can use the language pack editor to change the pre-defined Lesson Plan sections and provide teachers familiar section titles. Changes made within the language pack will apply to all instances of the Lesson Plan feature. For more information about the language pack editor, see *Working with Language Packs* available on [Behind the Blackboard](#).

Can the administrator define templates for lessons?

Release 9.1 does not provide an explicit template tool as part of the Lesson Plan. However, teachers or curriculum specialists may create shells by constructing Lesson Plans with the appropriate sections, section titles, and organization, and then use the Course or item copy functionality to reuse the defined format and structure for additional Lesson Plans within this or other Courses. These pre-defined lesson plans could be included by default in a Course shell.

Can I copy a lesson?

Lesson plans, their included content items, and all standards alignments will be maintained during a full Course copy, Course archive, or Course export operation. In addition, K-12 teachers and curriculum specialists can share individual or groups of Lesson Plans with colleagues. Although there is no explicit export feature for individual Lesson Plans, the Course export operation can be used to accomplish this task. To do so, create Content Areas containing one or more Lesson Plans, use the Course export operation to export those Content Areas, and then upload the resulting .ZIP packages into another Course or email the packages to other teachers with whom you want to share resources.

Content that is owned by the Lesson Plan as well as all standards alignments will be included in the export. Links to content not explicitly owned by the Lesson Plan (such as Assignments, Tests, Surveys, and content linked using Course links) will be included, but the original content items will not. If the referenced content items do not exist in the destination Course, the links will be broken and the content will need to be recreated.

Mashups

Increasingly, sites and services on the Web offer the means for end-users to consume and re-use the site's content outside of the site itself. In Web 2.0 applications, the term "Mashup" refers to displaying data from one third-party application in another application. For example, a real estate listing service that maps the homes-for-sale listing data onto Google Maps.

In educational settings, this ability to consume and re-use external content offers the opportunity for Instructors to incorporate content generated and hosted elsewhere into instructional or learning activities.

The new Mashup integrations with popular services allow Instructors and Students to discover, select, and embed content from those services without ever leaving the Blackboard Learn interface. This provides a seamless, easy-to-use experience that does not require the user to jump between Blackboard Learn and other sites or to have any particular knowledge about or comfort with HTML codes.

The Mashup tools, which are delivered as Building Blocks, are available by default. As long as a Mashup tool remains available, Instructors can add that Mashup type anywhere in a Course and Students can add Mashups anywhere the text editor is available to them, such as when creating Discussion Board or Blog posts.

Uploading Mashups Content

This release supports the uploading of Mashups content from the following third-party services:

- **YouTube:** YouTube enables users to share videos.
- **Flickr:** Flickr enables users to share photos.
- **SlideShare:** SlideShare enables users to share presentations.

Building Block Developers can also take advantage of new APIs to create their own Mashup integrations.

Filtering YouTube Content

Administrators can configure the YouTube Mashup to filter out videos that have been flagged as inappropriate by YouTube users. This setting can be especially useful for K-12 clients.

Note Because YouTube users flag content based on their perceptions, inappropriate content may still appear in search results even when this option is enabled.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

Yes. Uploading Mashups content requires an Enterprise Edition license. Basic Edition clients cannot upload Mashup content.

Where does this feature appear?

Users can add Mashup content using the action bar menu in content areas or through the text editor (VTBE).

The action bar item is available only to Course roles with the ability to add content to a content area. Each individual Mashup will have its own content handler under the main Build Content action bar button. Clicking this button presents a drop-down to choose the specific type of Mashup.

The VTBE action is available to all users anywhere that a VTBE is displayed, as long as the third row of buttons has been enabled.

If created from the action bar, Mashup content will appear as its own content item. If created through the VTBE, Mashup content will appear within a content item.

System Administrators manage Building Blocks from the Administrator Panel under **Building Blocks** by clicking **Building Blocks** and then clicking **Installed Tools**.

Did this feature change any existing workflows?

This feature introduces new search, select, and embed workflows for third-party content. It does not change any existing workflows.

Can anything be a Mashup?

No. Mashups are not automatic. A developer has to create a Mashup building block to pull the third-party service's content into Blackboard Learn. Also, not all services have APIs that allow that sort of integration to occur.

Why didn't Blackboard build a Mashup with _____?

For this release, Blackboard targeted stable, free, web-based services that focus on sharing user generated content. Mashups may be possible with other types of services, but the goal was to provide an easy and effective way to incorporate user-generated content from these services into Blackboard Learn.

In addition, not all services allow for use of their public APIs in commercial products.

Can we build our own Mashups?

Yes. The APIs necessary to take advantage of the Mashups deployment points in the action bar and VTBE and the Mashups framework are available as part of the Release 9.1 Building Blocks APIs. For more information, see <http://www.blackboard.com/Support/Extensions.aspx>.

Will Blackboard build more Mashups with other services?

Blackboard may build additional Mashups, but the hope is that the client base will be proactive in creating new Mashups using the Building Blocks APIs.

My Places

My Places is an expansion of a best-of-breed tool from the CE product line that provides the user with quick and easy navigation to a variety of places within Blackboard Learn. It is always one click away in the top frame, and contains a customizable set of links to frequently accessed information as well as tools to personalize a user's own experience. All users should be educated about the new features.

Feature Enhancement

+ One Click Access to Common Links and Preferences

Users can navigate to commonly accessed places within the system, such as Courses they teach or participate in, without having to return to a common starting point.

+ Customizable List of Commonly Accessed Links

Users can define which links are displayed in My Places. These may include Courses, Organizations, Bookmarks, and Outcomes Places. The types of links available depend on the institution's Blackboard licenses.

All users can choose to display a list of Courses and organizations that have been accessed in the last [X] number of days. The value for [X] is 30 by default but can be changed by the user.

If the content management capabilities have been licensed, users can also choose to display a list of their Content Collection bookmarks (taken directly from the list of book marks in Content Collection).

If the outcomes assessment capabilities have been licensed, users can also choose to display a list of Place affiliations.

If the community engagement capabilities have been licensed, users will have a link to the Notifications Dashboard if it is enabled.

All System Administrators will have a direct link to the Administrator Panel from My Places.

+ Manage Notifications Settings

From My Places, users will be able to manage notification settings for all Courses and organizations they are enrolled in as well as other personal and privacy settings including updating their name, address and contact information, determining what information is public, who can view it, and who can email them.

+ Personal Avatar Image

Avatars are a personal image which can be used to represent the user throughout their online experience. Administrators can enable avatars on the system and either allow a user to upload an image of their choice or select an institution approved image to display. Avatars are displayed in My Places, Blogs, Journals, and within Notification Modules including: What's New, Needs Attention, To Do, and Alerts. Users will have quick access to accessibility options including how to enable the Blackboard interface to display according to operating system settings for high contrast and how to increase the browser font size. If avatars are enabled by the System Administrator, the additional function will include policies for image selection and upload.

+ Quick Access to Personal Settings

Users can access personal settings such as email and privacy settings in one click, no matter where they are in the system.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

Yes. Content Collection bookmarks will be available for display in My Places only if the content management capabilities have been licensed.

Links to Outcomes Places will be available for display in My Places only if the outcomes assessment capabilities have been licensed.

Organization links and the link to the Notifications Dashboard will be available for display in My Places only if the community engagement capabilities have been licensed.

Where does this feature appear?

All users will access My Places from a direct link in the top frame. Administrators can manage avatars from the Tools and Utilities section of the Administrator Panel.

Are there changes to existing workflows?

My Places contains all of the links that are also available through Personal Information. Direct access to the Personal Information tool is still available from the Tools module.

What does the System Administrator need to know about Avatars?

Avatars can be enabled or disabled by the system administrator at any time, for the entire system.

If enabled, the administrator has the option to allow users to upload their own image or select from a system approved image.

User-uploaded images do not go through any approval or moderation process, but they are stored in a specific file system location and the avatar file name contains the user's user ID, so files can be deleted or otherwise managed as needed.

If the administrator opts to have users choose a system approved image, the admin will need to upload the set of images to the Blackboard system and define the location in the settings pages for Avatars.

Notifications

Notifications recognizes that Instructors do not live in Blackboard and delivers their Course information to them via email in a format that draws them back into Blackboard to view or act upon the Notification.

Notifications provide an excellent reference point for Instructors to keep abreast of their Students' Course related activities on a daily basis. Combined with the Early Warning System, Notifications give Instructors insight into which Students may be at risk and provides a mechanism for communication with their Students.

The customization of Notifications gives users increased control over their experience within Blackboard and provides a way for System Administrators to decide which aspects of the Notifications system they will provide to their users.

What's New in this Release for Instructors?

Blackboard Learn provides timely and actionable Notifications of Instructor's Course information, including when new content becomes available, when Students meet Early Warning System rules criteria and when Student submitted assignments and tests are available for grading. Notifications are displayed in modules within Blackboard Learn and are delivered by email, either as individual email notes or as a daily Notifications digest.

While not new to Blackboard Learn, Instructors should consider several things when creating Course content to take full advantage of Notifications:

- **Content Availability**, which can be controlled by the Display As Of dates in the content properties
- **Adaptive Release rules**, which will be respected by Notifications
- **Early Warning System rules**

The user experience is much improved with this centralized view of Course related activity. If the community engagement capabilities have been licensed, Instructors are no longer required to keep track of their Students' activities inside each Course. Instead, they will have easy access to notifications across all of their Courses. The format of the display automatically segments by urgency, further automating the process of determining which of the multitude of events require immediate attention, or which can be deferred.

What's New in this Release for Students?

Blackboard Learn provides timely and actionable Notifications of Student's Course information, including when new content becomes available and Due Dates of Assignments and Tests. Notifications are displayed in modules within Blackboard Learn and are delivered by email, either as individual email notes or as a daily Notifications digest.

Notifications will make Students' online learning experience much nicer. Instead of hunting around for all of their new content and wondering when Assignments and Tests are due, this information will be given to them in an easily consumable format. Using the context menu to navigate to the appropriate action page (that is, Assignment Due notification will take the Student to the Submit Assignment page and Survey Available notification will take the Student to the Survey), Students will have a more intuitive way to navigate Blackboard Learn.

If the community engagement capabilities have been licensed, the To Do List on the Notifications Dashboard gives Students a single source of all of their upcoming Due Dates, allowing for more efficient management of their time.

What's New in this Release for Administrators?

Release 9.1 provides timely Notifications of what is happening in the user's Courses, including newly available content and surveys as well as assignment and test due dates.

The Notifications subsystem can be customized on several different levels:

- User-level personalization of Notifications
- System-wide settings, including general availability of Notifications
- Default Notifications settings that affect newly created Courses and organizations

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on license?

All Blackboard Learn licenses provide on-line Notifications within Courses and through email. The community engagement capabilities provide an additional Notifications Dashboard, which shows Students a roll-up of their Notifications across all of their Courses and Organizations.

Where does this feature appear?

Notifications modules can be made role-specific and can reside on any Modules page in the system. By default they appear on the Home Page within Courses and, if the community engagement capabilities have been licensed, on the Notifications Dashboard tab of My Institution.

Four Notifications modules are available to users:

- **To Do List** shows future due dates as well as any due dates they may have missed.
- **What's New** shows all Course content as it becomes available and any unread posts to Discussion Boards, Blogs, and Journals.
- **Needs Attention** shows Student submissions that are ready for grading. This is an excellent place for Instructors to get a sense of what needs to be done today.
- **Alerts** show Students who have not submitted work as of its due date and Early Warning System rules. It provides a good sense of which Students may be falling behind in their Course work.

Students can access their Notifications Settings through a button on each of the Notifications modules and through My Places. Students can choose, on a Course-by-Course basis, which types of Notifications they want to receive and whether they want to receive Notifications by email.

Administrators can access the various notifications settings from the Administrator Panel. For Course administrative settings, under **Courses**, click **Course Settings**. For Organization administrative settings, under **Organizations**, click **Organization Settings**. Administrators can access the general notification settings from the Administrator Panel under **Tools and Utilities** by clicking **Notifications**.

Are there any changes to existing workflows?

The What's New module has been removed in favor of Notifications module.

How do Instructors create Notifications and when will Students receive Notifications?

Most Notifications are tied directly to the creation of Course content. When creating Course content, Instructors can control the delivery of Notifications in several ways:

- **Display As Of date range:** Content Availability Notifications will be sent to Students based on these dates. If there are no Display As Of dates on the item, Notifications will be delivered immediately.
- **Adaptive Release Rules:** Any content that is subject to Adaptive Release rules will send Notifications to the appropriate Students if and when they meet the criteria of the Adaptive Release rules.
- **Announcements:** When creating Announcements, email Notifications can be forced to Students by email, regardless of what personalization settings the Student may have. This is an excellent way to send emergency Notifications, such as when a class is canceled.

Some Notifications are created by the actions of Students, as when a Student submits an Assignment or Survey, or when posts are made to Discussion Board forums, Blogs, and Journals.

How can Students use Notifications to take action?

Notifications, both on-line and in email, include links to pages where Students can take appropriate actions. For instance, Notifications for unread Discussion Board postings contain links to the Course Discussion Board and Notifications for Submitted Assignments contain links to the Assignment Submission page. Most Notifications also provide a quick way to send an email to the Instructor or Course Group members pertinent to that Notification.

Many Instructors use Announcements as a way to notify Students when Assignments are due. Do Announcements generate Notifications to Students?

Students will receive Notifications when Course Announcements become available to them. However, Instructors will discover that Students are also receiving Notifications when Assignments become available and are due and will quickly learn they can rely on Notifications to keep Students up to date.

How can Instructors take advantage of Notifications to determine at-risk Students?

The Alerts module displays information about which Students that may be at risk. For example, if a Student misses a Due Date for an Assignment, a Passed Due Notification displays in the Alerts Module.

The Alerts module also displays Early Warning System rules created by the Instructor. The Early Warning System is an excellent way to search for at risk behaviors. Rules can be created based on a Student's last access to the Course, on specific Grade Center columns or on specific Due Dates. Once a day, these rules will collect the latest information about which Students meet the rule criteria. Results of Early Warning System rules are displayed in the Alerts module.

How can Instructors communicate with Students?

Each Notification has a contextual menu. For many types of Notification this menu provides, among other actions, a quick way to communicate with Students or Groups by email.

How can Instructors track Course activity on a daily basis?

The Needs Attention module displays all Student Submissions that are ready to be graded. Not only can Instructors easily see which Students have submitted each assignment, they can use the Notifications' context menu to navigate directly to the submission page where they can view and grade the submission. Submission Notifications even tell the Instructors if a submission came in after the due date.

The To Do List shows the due dates of Assignments and Tests. What if a Student wants a few days advanced notice?

Students can set up Reminders by email for Due Date Notifications by defining how many days in advance they would like to receive them.

Are Notifications only for Course content?

Notifications cover Course and Organization content, but not System Announcements. Students can have different personalization settings for each of their Courses and organizations.

How do Students receive email Notifications?

Email Notifications are turned off by default. If the System Administrator has turned on email Notification, Students can select which types of Notifications they would like to receive in email form.

Students can also elect to have their email Notifications come individually (one email note per notifications) or as a daily digest of all new Notifications.

Is the Notifications System enabled by default?

No. The System Administrator will need to turn on Notifications before any Course/Organization Notification data will be collected.

The Notifications System is on and users receive Online Notifications, but are not receiving Email Notifications. Why?

Email is turned off by default on the user level as well. The System Administrator can turn on email Notifications to give users the ability to choose if they want individual email or a daily digest of their notifications. However, users still need to opt-in to email notifications by editing their Notifications Settings.

Is there a way to clear out old, unneeded notifications?

Many Notifications have known life cycles. For example, an Assignment Due Date Notification will be removed from your display once you have submitted the Assignment. Others, such as new Content Available Notifications do not have an obvious life cycle. These Notifications can be removed, individually or en mass, using the Dismiss option from a context menu.

When Students personalize their Notifications via Edit Notifications Settings, they can also set up an Aging option, which will automatically dismiss older Notifications. Due Date Notifications are not dismissed by this setting.

Both the System Administrator and individual users can control how long to keep old notifications:

- The System Administrator can set the number of days in which to retain Notifications. This is a good way to clear out Notifications from previous semesters.
- Individual users can choose to dismiss their older notifications by setting their own number of days to retain them. However, a user's setting cannot exceed that of the System Administrator.

Based on these settings, Notifications that are not Due Date specific will be deleted X number of days after creation. Also, any Notification can be dismissed (removed from the users display) manually.

Will too many Notifications pose performance concerns?

Notifications will increase overall load on system, particularly just prior to and early in the semester when Course content, and therefore the Notifications, are being created. After the semester gets underway, expect online performance issues to be limited to a bit of a hesitation when loading pages where the Notifications modules reside.

What options are available to ensure performance?

Administrators can turn off email Notifications all together. They can also force users to get their email Notifications as a daily digest. There is a setting that determines when digest email Notifications are processed. This can be set to a low usage time of day to alleviate some of the pressure on the server. Finally, the display of notifications is cached and the each module indicates when the data was last refreshed. Users can choose to manually refresh any time or let the system refresh the display at regular intervals (the default interval is 30 minutes).

What can users modify?

Users can decide on a Course-by-Course, Organization-by-Organization basis which types of Notifications they want to receive and whether or not they want to receive them by email.

Standards Alignment for K-12 Clients

K-12 instruction is based on meeting standards of learning that are determined at the state level. Districts engage in a complex process of associating curriculum resources, lesson plans, and assessment items with specific state standards to ensure that instructional programs (Course, Unit, and Lesson Plans) are in alignment with those standards. Although state learning standards are unique from state to state, there is considerable overlap. Also, standards are hierarchical in nature. That is, each state learning standard has two or more levels of description. In practice, most alignment happens at the deepest level, but this relationship rolls up to inform general alignment at all levels.

The problems encountered by teachers and administrators include time consuming and error prone processes, constrained collaboration because of voluminous paper-based resources and materials, and limited use of web-based and electronic tools.

The problems are exacerbated because state standards change periodically and realignment is often necessary. Districts create their own scope and sequence for teaching to the standards and often identify “power standards” to emphasize priority based on instructional programs and alignment. They must establish a relative priority and consistency must be maintained through standards changes.

Schools and institutions are challenged by not having data available to assist with guiding instructional resource development. Curriculum and instructional resources are often dispersed and inconsistently maintained thereby making it difficult to accurately assess what materials are available and how those materials support the learning of specific standards.

Release 9.1 includes a number of new features that enable learning standards to be incorporated into Blackboard Learn Courses and ultimately to align Course content with specific standards. This is part of an overall effort to support standards-based learning within the Blackboard Learn environment. The following sections describe the major components of this effort.

For more information than is included in this document, see *Standards and Alignments for K-12* available on [Behind the Blackboard](#).

Importing Standards into Blackboard Courses

All published Learning Standards from all 50 states and the District of Columbia will be available for use in Release 9.1. The System Administrator can download the desired Standards from [Behind the Blackboard](#) and import them into Blackboard Learn.

Curriculum specialists with system administration privileges can import state learning standard documents into Blackboard Learn and make the standards available at the Course level for the purposes of content alignment. The standards are presented in the system in a structured manner that uses each state’s language, numbering schema, and organizational framework to maintain familiarity to users.

Curriculum specialists can associate specific Courses to a set of learning standards so that during the content alignment process, users may have starting points of standards commonly associated with content used in those specific Courses. This does not limit users in any way to what standards can be aligned within a Course.

Aligning Content to Standards

Curriculum specialists and teachers can browse and search for standards that have been imported into Blackboard Learn. Content items within their Courses or organizations can be specifically aligned to one or multiple standards. Users may also align Grade Center columns individually to standards.

Updating Standards

When users download a new version of any standards document from [Behind the Blackboard](#), it includes a map between the previous version and the current version. This significantly reduces the time spent comparing standards and understanding what has changed.

In addition, a user can create a map between any two standards documents that exist in Blackboard Learn. This enables users to map state standards to national standards and standards from one state to those in any other state that has been imported. Additionally, users can create cross-discipline maps for areas of study that may fall in science and math, for example.

Running Standards Coverage Reports

The data contained in the Standards Coverage Reports help teachers, curriculum specialists, and district administrators to focus curriculum development efforts. This data shows Course content alignments and helps identify gaps in coverage of standards.

Administrators can run a number of reports from the Standards Documents pages on the Administrator Panel that show content alignments for standards across all Courses, all available Courses, or all unavailable Courses. These reports include:

- **Full Standards Coverage Overview:** This report shows coverage across all imported standards for a specific state and document type showing both Covered standards and Gaps in coverage.
- **Discipline Coverage Overview:** This report shows coverage overview of standards for a specific discipline broken out across all its learning levels, such as Math 2004 for Grade 5.
- **Learning Level Coverage Detail:** This report shows detailed coverage information for the standards within a specific Learning Level, such as for Grade 5.
- **Learning Standard Coverage Detail:** This report shows detailed coverage information for a single standard within Blackboard Learn.

In addition, teachers can run a **Course Coverage Detail** report from the Evaluation section of the Course Control Panel that shows detailed coverage information for a single Course.

Creating Custom Standards

Many school districts and institutions incorporate their own learning standards into their respective states' published standards to enhance or extend the state standards and define learning goals and objectives that exceed state expectations of Student learning. With the K-12 Standards feature, school district administrators can create custom standard line items that are integrated into their respective state learning standards.

Note Release 9.1 does not include the functionality to enable a district to create custom sets of standards.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on license level?

The Standards Alignment feature requires a Blackboard Learn for K-12 license.

Where does this feature appear?

System Administrators download the desired Standards from [Behind the Blackboard](#) and import them into Blackboard Learn.

System Administrators manage standards availability, active/inactive status, Course association, and document mapping from the Administrator Panel under **Tools and Utilities** by clicking **Standards Documents**.

Instructors and Course designers align content using content contextual menus and column contextual menus in the Grade Center.

Am I allowed to have standards from other states installed on my Blackboard Learn system?

Yes. All published Learning Standards from all 50 states and the District of Columbia will be available for use in Release 9.1. System Administrators can download the desired Standards from [Behind the Blackboard](#) and import them into Blackboard Learn. There are no limitations on the standards that can be downloaded providing districts and institutions with the ability to integrate standards from multiple states into a single Blackboard Learn environment.

Can I report against performance metrics from my standards alignments?

In Release 9.1, the focus is on integrating the standards with the content created within the Course and allowing both teachers and district administrators to review standards coverage data for a single Course or across multiple Courses. Reports focusing on performance against the state standards are not available in Release 9.1, but the foundation for this kind reporting has been provided. Performance data is available in the Grade Center (in which columns can be explicitly aligned to state standards), the Early Warning System, the Assessment Statistics reports, and the Performance Dashboard.

Blackboard is continuing to investigate standards performance reporting and the specific needs surrounding it for possible inclusion in a future release. The Blackboard reporting framework also provides the ability for custom report development and can be leveraged to develop additional reports to address specific reporting needs you may have.

Is there any additional cost for getting state standards into my Blackboard Learn system?

No. There are no additional fees for downloading any of the standards available on [Behind the Blackboard](#). All state standards are included in the current Blackboard Learn license fee.

Can I share already aligned content with other schools or districts?

Yes. Alignments can be optionally included in any Course copy, Course export, or Course import operation provided that the specific content items have also been included. All content alignments are automatically included in any Course archive or Course restore operation. The visibility of imported or restored alignments depends on the availability of the appropriate state standards in the destination system.

Can my district develop its own set of standards?

Custom standards line items may be authored and incorporated into the existing state standards framework. There is no capability for creating and incorporating an entirely new set of standards within Blackboard Learn.

System-Wide Changes

All users will enjoy a number of changes in Blackboard which impact the entire system.

Feature Enhancement

+ Embedded Help

Embedded help throughout Blackboard helps users with and without disabilities access the features of Blackboard easily. The personal setting to hide or show help until the user chooses to call upon it again helps users from both perspectives: it removes text from the application that may be distracting, or it adds text to the application that helps them without forcing them to leave what they are doing. Institutions also have the option to customize this help text to meet their specific needs.

+ New User Interface Design

Users will enjoy not only a new look, but advanced user interface functionality such as drag and drop, inline edit capabilities and consolidated page layouts.

+ Inline Confirmations Everywhere

Instead of separate receipt pages, inline confirmations are used throughout the system for more seamless workflows.

+ Fewer Clicks Everywhere

Users will enjoy using fewer clicks to navigate the system and complete tasks.

Feature Loss

- Electric Blackboard

Now Students can use Journals to complete these same tasks—it is also much more fully featured than the Electric Blackboard tool. For more information, see [Blogs and Journals](#).

- Digital Dropbox

The more robust Assignments tool and the Group File Exchange feature meets the needs of individual users and Groups for completing and managing Course work. These functions made the Digital Drop Box obsolete. For more information, see [Assignments](#).

- Student Homepages

Student homepages are no longer needed because the new Blogs tool enables Students to express their thoughts and reflect on learning within a Course and the My Places tool allows Student to post their avatar system-wide (instead of limited to the Course environment) and includes additional functionality and a customizable set of links to frequently accessed information as well as tools to personalize a user's own experience. For more information, see [Blogs and Journals](#).

- eCommerce

This add-on product line is no longer available with Blackboard Learn.

– **Offline Content**

Offline Content can no longer be added to a Course. The Offline content type will no longer be available when uploading content. For more information about available Content Types, see [Course Navigation and Content](#).

System Administration

Administrators will find that there have been a number of changes to the administrative tools available in previous releases of Blackboard. New features include a smart user interface that only shows the features available to the user and an overall reorganization of the Administrator Panel for easier access to features.

Feature Enhancement

+ Administrator Panel Personalization

Users can drag and drop modules on the Administrator Panel to personalize it for their needs

+ Users See Only the Options Available

Users will only see those options that are available to them in the Administrator Panel. Options that are not available based on license and permissions do not appear.

Feature Change

Administrator Panel Organization

The Administrator Panel is streamlined with intuitive placement of like settings and tasks.

Outcomes Assessment Privileges Do Not Appear by Default

Privileges related to Outcomes do not appear in the Privileges management area unless the outcomes assessment capabilities have been licensed.

Tests, Surveys, and Question Pools

In Release 9.1, Instructors and Course Builders have expanded question management capabilities available for use when creating Tests, Surveys, and Question Pools. These changes allow for more centralized control over question content and reduce the amount of time required to make global edits.

Feature Enhancement

+ Question Finder

Instructors and Course Builders have a new interface from which to discover questions.

Instructors and Course Builders can create Tests, Surveys, and Pools by reusing questions that have been collected in the Question Finder repository. The list of questions available under “Find Questions” can be filtered by Test, Survey, or Pool, or by such attributes as question type, category, topic, or level of difficulty. As the user selects these attributes, the list of questions updates dynamically. The filtering capability is further enhanced by a search capability, which allows the user to refine the filtered list.

The discovery process is also aided by a new section in the user interface that acts as a staging area for questions. The user can peruse and select or deselect as many questions as they want. When they are finished, this collapsible staging area will contain their selected questions. The staging area allows users to keep track of how many questions they have selected.

+ Link to Questions

Instructors and Course Builders can choose to link to or copy questions from any Test, Survey, or Pool within a Course. Linking to a question ensures that any changes to the original question are reflected in all links. Copying a question creates a separate question that is not affected by changes to the original question. Questions can be copied between Courses, but they cannot be linked across Courses.

+ Question Sets

In addition to Random Blocks, Instructors can use Question Sets to randomly select a set number of questions to appear on a Test that are pulled from a specific group of questions selected by the Instructor. Instructors can select to include questions from one or more existing Tests and Pools. From this set, the Instructor specifies how many questions to display on the Test. The specific questions displayed are chosen randomly each time the Test is taken. This provides Instructors and Course Builders with a better idea of what will be displayed to Students than when using Random Blocks. This will make it easier to review the appropriateness of questions and help reduce the need to recreate Question Sets.

+ Random Block Improvements

The process to create or edit Random Blocks includes more capabilities.

+ Batch Deletion and Point Updates

Instructors and Course Builders can perform basic actions such as question deletion and point updates as batch actions, which can be targeted by question type. Users can update points for individual questions as well as points per question and number of questions to display for Random Blocks or Question Sets directly from the Canvas page. Taken together, these changes improve Instructor productivity and allow them to edit tests in less time.

+ Copy Test, Surveys, and Pools

Instructors and Course Builders can now copy a Test, Survey, or Pool directly from the List page. This addresses a common scenario in which an Instructor needs to provide a pre-test and post-test and needs to create two assessments that have more or less the same form. This capability also allows users to easily create new, smaller pools that contain a subset of questions of a larger pool. It is a much faster way to create similar tests compared to the import feature, which requires more steps.

+ Reorder Questions

Instructors and Course Builders can change the order of questions in a test or survey using the new drag and drop feature.

+ Fewer Clicks in All Workflows

Instructors and Course Builders will enjoy more efficient workflows with fewer clicks for creating, managing, and deploying tests and surveys.

Feature Loss

- Files Cannot Be Attached to Assignments from the Content Collection

Instructors cannot attach files from the Content Collection to Assignments. These files can be downloaded from the Content Collection to the Instructor's local desktop and attached to Assignments.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

No.

Where do these features appear?

The Question Finder interface can be accessed from the Canvas page for a Test, Survey, or Pool. For example, **[Course Name] > Course Tools > Tests, Surveys, and Pools > Tests > Test Canvas: [Test Name]**.

Questions Sets can be created and questions can be added from the task bar of the Canvas page. Click **Reuse Question** and then select the **Create Question Set** option or the **Find Questions** option. Both options will display the new Question Finder interface.

How has the question discovery and revision workflow been changed?

The process to discover and update questions that will be added to a Test, Survey, or Pool has been consolidated. The user is able to perform these tasks either directly on the Canvas page for the Test, Survey, or Pool, or at most only one more click away. Previously, the user had to navigate through several pages to perform the same task.

Text Editor

The user experience has improved and the Text Editor includes several enhancements.

Feature Enhancement

+ Accessibility improvements

Users requiring assistive technology can easily and quickly access the text area of the Text Editor.

+ Availability

The Text Editor is now available in more areas of Courses.

+ HTML Markup Validation

Users can quickly run a check against the HTML markup included in the Text Editor to ensure accuracy.

Textbook

A new button is available in a Content Area that enables Instructors to add a textbook to a Course. Instructors can manually add textbook information to the Course, or they can locate Textbooks in an external source, searching by title, author, subject, and ISBN.

Tracking Reports

The usability of the Tracking Reports feature has been greatly improved in Release 9.1. Please note that this feature was formerly referred to as Course Statistics.

Web Services and Proxy Tools

Feature Enhancement

+ Web Services Administration

Clients moving to Release 9.1 will be able to administer a set of Web Services across all nodes of their system from a single interface, including granular access control (per-service, per-tool, per-operation, and by access IP address or range). The Web Services Administrator Panel allows Administrators to upload new web services (.jar files) and delete previously uploaded web services.

In Release 9.1, a number of web services have been created, including web services to:

- Retrieve and manage announcements, including system, Course, and organization announcements.
- Retrieve and manage calendar items, including Course, institution, and user calendar items.
- Retrieve and manage content, including files, links, and tables of content.
- Retrieve and manage Courses, organizations, Groups, Course categories, and Course cartridges.
- Modify Course membership, Group membership, and Course roles.
- Retrieve and modify user information, system roles, institution roles, address book entries, and observer information.
- Retrieve and modify grade book columns, assignment attempts, and assignment grades.

Note Release 9.0 had an experimental grade book web service. In Release 9.1, this web service is now official. The 9.1 web service is not backward-compatible with the 9.0 web service.

+ Web Service Code Samples Published for Java and .NET

Developers can now download sample code in Java and .NET from the Proxy Tools link on the Administrator Panel. These code samples will help developers, especially .NET developers who can no longer use .NET APIs and Building Blocks, understand how to use the new web services.

+ Additional Support for Emerging LTI 2.0 Standard

The Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) specification, published by IMS Global, defines a standard way for Learning Management Systems (LMSs) to securely connect to external tools and resources. Individuals and organizations can use existing web development practices to create LTI-compliant, web-based learning tools that can then be embedded into the user experience of any LMS that conforms to the LTI specification.

By adding incremental support for the LTI specification as it evolves, Blackboard is in a better position to support the final specification when it is released.

In Release 9.0, Blackboard was the first LMS to support early versions of the LTI 2.0 specification.

In Release 9.1, Blackboard Learn supports the new naming conventions and formats found in the LTI 2.0 standard. No new features have been added, but Blackboard is now closer to supporting the final version of LTI 2.0 when it is released. All changes are backward compatible.

+ Building Blocks – Proxy Tools

Clients moving to Release 9.1 will be able to write custom integrations that can run remotely and access the system using well-defined Web Services interfaces.

Third parties writing such integrations will be able to negotiate for specific permissions to retrieve data, write data, or execute code on the Release 9.1 server, which can be approved and monitored by the administrator.

Proxy Tool code and Web Services documentation is available from <http://www.edugarage.com>.

+ New Bundled Building Blocks from Premier Partners

Blackboard has worked closely with key partners to deliver valuable new functionality through its Building Block infrastructure. Four new Building Blocks will ship with Release 9.1 and be available to both Enterprise and Basic Edition clients:

- **Horizon Wimba-Pronto** - Instant messaging, online collaboration client
- **Acxiom** - Identity verification for use in managing the delivery of tests
- **Echo 360** - Lecture capture
- **NBC** - Rich media content from NBC for use in the Course

Institutions must register each Building Block with the respective vendor before using it.

+ Improved Command Line Building Block Management Tool

The B2Manager command line tool now includes all of the functionality that is available on the Building Blocks page accessible from the Administrator Panel.

All clients can use this tool, but because Basic Edition clients do not have access to the Building Blocks page, the command line tool enables them to manage their Building Blocks.

Administrators will be able to do the following using the B2Manager tool:

- List all installed Building Blocks.
- Install and remove Building Blocks.
- Change the system availability and default Course availability of a Building Block
- Retrieve a URL to the configuration page for each Building Block.

For more information, see the Administrator topics in [Blackboard Help](#).

+ Additional Touch Points for Building Blocks Exposed

Building Block developers can now register Building Blocks to be displayed in new places within Blackboard Learn, including:

- The User context menu on the User List page
- The Course context menu on the Course List page
- The Manage Grade Center menu
- The Mashups Menu on any content page
- A button on the Visual Text Box Editor (Mashups only)

For more information, see the Blackboard Learn Building Blocks API specifications available on [Behind the Blackboard](#).

Feature Loss

– .NET APIs and .NET Building Blocks Deprecated

Blackboard no longer supports the .NET APIs and .NET Building Blocks.

Blackboard has found that most institutions were using .NET Building Blocks to automate administrative tasks such as creating users and Courses. These tasks can be accomplished using the new [Web Services](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

Yes. The Premier Partner Building Blocks are available to all license levels including Basic Edition, but they are limited to specific market licenses as defined in the following table.

	NAHE	K-12	ProEd	INTL
Wimba-Pronto				
Acxiom				
Echo360				
NBC				

Where do these features appear?

System Administrators manage Web Services from the Administrator Panel under **Building Blocks** by clicking **Web Services**.

System Administrators download Java and .NET sample code from the Administrator Panel under **Building Blocks** by clicking **Building Blocks** and then **Proxy Tools**.

System Administrators manage Building Blocks from the Administrator Panel under **Building Blocks** by clicking **Building Blocks**.

Does Blackboard Learn fully support LTI 2.0?

No. It is currently impossible to support the full LTI 2.0 specification because it is still in draft form and constantly changing. The improvements bring Blackboard Learn closer to what the specification will be when it is complete.

Did this feature change any existing workflows?

Existing tool integrations managed formerly from the Administrator Panel under **Building Blocks** are now managed from the Administrator Panel under **Building Blocks** by clicking **Building Blocks** and then **Installed Tools**. At the Course and organization level, tool integrations managed formerly from the Control Panel by clicking **Manage Tools** and then **Building Blocks Tools**, are now managed from the Control Panel by clicking **Customization** and then **Tool Availability**.

All tools are managed from the same interface. The Instructor or Course builder does not need to know whether the tool is an installed tool, a proxy tool, or a native Blackboard tool.

Why choose a Proxy Tool?

- Remote administration (many NG installations, one central service) or just segregation of service (SIS system stays separate from NG system)
- No Java required
- Data can be hosted remotely
- Potential for access without requiring a logged-in user (once authorized)
- More transparency of administration and less potential to interfere with core

Why choose a Building Block?

- Need to use an API not yet exposed via Web Services
- Need backward compatibility to Academic Suite Release 8 or older
- Easier integration with NG Look and Feel and user/session management
- Need to deploy module content

When do I need Proxy Placements for my tool?

- To place links in the Control Panel, Administrator Panel, or Student or Group tools
- To handle content types in Courses
- To have NG users initiate calls out to your service, rather than just having your service initiate

Do Proxy Tools have to be written in Java?

No. Unlike installed Building Blocks, proxy tool code can be written in any language that can support SOAP-based Web Services protocol.

Are there performance concerns?

While Building Blocks run directly in the Java Virtual Machine (JVM) on the Blackboard Learn server, Proxy Tools run on remote machines. As a result, the risk of memory leaks impacting Blackboard Learn performance is minimal, but there is the potential of increased network traffic to the Blackboard Learn server from Proxy Tools. As with any third-party code, if it is poorly written it could impact performance. Proxy tools can be blocked individually, at the service or operation level, or constrained to a particular IP address or range using the administrative interface.

What Services are supported?

Release 9.1 ships with a number of services. All operations of each service are documented (and can be enabled or disabled) from the administrative interface.

Blackboard Consulting should be able to provide additional services as needed to expose any operation that can be accomplished by an installed Building Block using the Blackboard Learn Java API.

What protocols do the Web Services support?

Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) is supported. Representational state transfer (REST) protocol is not.

The Services themselves are deployed over the Apache foundation's Axis framework (<http://ws.apache.org/axis/>) with proprietary Blackboard extensions for session management and authorization negotiation.

What's New Module

The What's New module in Release 9.1 has been enhanced to provide users with easier access to notifications and new content.

Feature Enhancement

+ Course and Organization Information

In previous releases the module displayed new content that had been added to Courses in which the user was enrolled. In Release 9.1, the What's New Module shows new Course and Organization content, providing links directly to the item. Performance has also been enhanced for this feature.

Wikis

The new Wiki tool allows Instructors to create Wikis for Courses, organizations, and Groups to host collaborative content and group projects.

Course and organization Wikis allow the entire Course or organization to participate. Group Wikis allow a subset of the Course or organizations members to work on collaborative projects.

Instructors specify whether and when Students are allowed to view or edit a particular Wiki.

For the Wiki feature to be available in Courses, the administrator must enable the Wiki Building Block.

Supporting Collaborative Learning

For clients who have licensed only the Course delivery capabilities, Wikis provide a collaborative area for Course content that allows Student participation and contribution. Both Students and Instructors can easily create content within the Wiki such as study guides and shared notes. For clients who have licensed the community engagement capabilities, Wikis provide organizations with a powerful collaborative editing tool that can be used for any content that requires collaboration and change tracking, such as meeting minutes, by-laws, or simple pieces of content.

Instructors can also use the Wiki for collaborative group projects where the Wiki's history and participation summary tools give the Instructor more in-depth insight when assessing individual contributions of the Students while grading as well as throughout the collaborative process.

Students can use the Wiki to collaborate on content for the Course as well as for group projects. The Wiki's collaborative capabilities and history features help Students see what other Students have contributed and help avoid overwriting each other's work. For Groups, the Wiki can be used to simply share ideas or to host the final output of a group project.

Creating and Editing Wikis

Wikis are created and edited using the same Visual Editor (VTBE) that is used throughout Blackboard Learn. Users do not need to learn a special Wiki markup language.

Users can create multiple pages in a Wiki as well as create multiple Wikis. Users can link between Wiki pages to make it easy to interconnect pages. Page navigation is provided to quickly navigate between the pages of a Wiki even if the users do not add links within page content.

Versioning and Comparing Pages

Versioning at the page level allows for complete tracking of content changes in the Wiki. Users can view a comparison of two versions of a Wiki page to see the specific changes that a user made to a Wiki page.

Grading Wikis

Instructors can grade Wikis without having to leave the Wiki and go to the Grade Center. Students can be given group or individual grades to allow grading based on individual contribution.

Viewing Participation Summaries

Instructors are provided with a summary of Student participation in a Wiki that allows them to drill down to detailed views to help assess each Student's contribution. Instructors can view a summary of participation as counts and percentages of words and saves for each Student. Instructors can then drill down for each Student to see a summary and details for that Student's contributions. Instructors also can compare a Student's saved version with the previous version of the page to evaluate that Student's contribution. Grading is integrated at this level to help Instructors grade based on an individual Student's contribution.

Commenting on Wiki Pages

Users can comment on the pages of a Wiki to give feedback and facilitate collaboration.

Creating Wiki Links as Course Content

Instructors can link to a Wiki or Wiki page in Course content.

Using Adaptive Release

Wikis support the standard Adaptive Release options.

Importing and Exporting Content

Wikis support standard Blackboard Learn content exchange to export/import and copy with Courses.

Aligning Wikis with K-12 Standards

Wikis support the K-12 Standards and Alignment functionality available in Release 9.1. For more information, see [Standards Alignment for K-12 Clients](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any exceptions based on licensing?

Yes. This feature requires an Enterprise Edition license. Wikis are not available for Basic Edition clients.

Where does this feature appear?

The Wiki appears as a tool in Courses and organizations as well as a tool that can be made available for Groups. In addition, it is possible to add a link to a Wiki or Wiki page in Course content.

Did this feature change any existing workflows?

No. The Wiki is a new feature.

Will the Blackboard Learn Wiki feature affect clients who use third-party Wiki products such as Learning Objects TeamsLX Wiki?

No. Clients may continue to use other Wiki products such as Learning Objects TeamsLX.

Why would someone use the Blackboard Learn Wiki feature versus a third-party Wiki tool?

The Blackboard Learn Wiki feature offers basic Wiki functionality with strong tools for assessing individual contribution and grading Wikis. It has the advantage of being integrated in the Blackboard Learn environment and providing users with a familiar user experience.

Is the Wiki a Building Block? If so, can it work with older releases?

The Wiki is a Building Block, but it will not work in previous releases because it relies on infrastructure that is new to Release 9.1.

Community Engagement Features

All clients will benefit from the following new branding features if they license the community engagement capabilities of Blackboard Learn.

Feature Enhancement

+ Tab Groups

Grouping tabs organizes related content in a way that improves user experience and saves screen real estate.

+ Customized User Communities

Administrators have the ability to brand separate schools, or provide one user experience for faculty (or a subset of faculty), and one experience for Students by applying separate themes, palettes and color customizations. For example, the Administrator may select to use the BbClassic theme for one set of users at their institution. This theme is inspired by Release 8 and designed to make users comfortable in their online environment.

+ Customize Login Page

A section of the Login page may be customized for each supported host name. This allows the Institution to brand the entry point for separate schools differently by URL.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where do these features appear?

Feature	Location
Tabs	On the Administrator Panel, under Communities , click Tabs and Modules . On the Tabs and Modules page, click Tabs .
Login Page	On the Administrator Panel, under Communities , click Brands and Themes . On the Brands and Themes page, click Customize Login Page .
Themes	On the Administrator Panel, under Communities , click Brands and Themes .
Gateway Page	On the Administrator Panel, under Security , click Gateway Options .
Announcements	On the Administrator Panel, under Tools and Utilities , click Announcements .
Themes	On the Administrator Panel, under Communities , click Brands and Themes .

Do I have to know CSS to customize Blackboard Learn?

No. Administrators who are comfortable with the Blackboard Learn interface can use the theme and palette library that ships with Release 9.1 to choose one of more than 100 combinations of theme and color palette for their system. If the community engagement capabilities have been licensed, Administrators can apply distinct combinations to any campus community they choose, by institution role, hostname, or both. Furthermore, with the new Blackboard Learn color picker, more than 16 million color choices are available for any of the 21 commonly used color elements in the system.

Content Management Features

All users who have licensed the content management capabilities of Blackboard Learn will enjoy a more powerful experience when managing their content in Release 9.1.

The following content management features have been enhanced:

- [Building Content](#)
- [Passes and Permissions](#)
- [Recycle Bins](#)
- [Search Content](#)
- [Views and Navigation](#)

Building Content

Feature Enhancement

+ Upload Multiple Files or Folders

As in Course Files, Instructors can upload multiple files or entire folders from the local computer into the Content Collection using Browse or by dragging the items directly from the desktop to the interface. Instructors can also upload a package of HTML files to be unpackaged automatically into the Content Collection. The same options for defining certain settings and metadata that currently exist when uploading a single file will be available during the process and can be applied to multiple files.

+ Create Folders In-Line

Instructors can create a new folder in the Content Collection without being taken to a separate page. When an Instructor clicks **Create Folder** on the main page, the name of the new folder can be typed in the text box that appears. To add the folder using the default folder settings, the Instructor clicks **Submit**. To add the folder using customized folder settings, the Instructor clicks **Create and Customize**.

Frequently Asked Questions

Did this feature change any existing product workflows or behavior?

Yes. Instructors upload multiple files at once using is a new option that is separate from the upload a single file option. In addition, Instructors now create folders on the main Content Collection page.

What technology is used to support the ability to Upload Multiple Files and Folders?

This capability was implemented as a Java applet with the same client-side requirements as currently exists for the Virtual Classroom feature of the Course delivery capabilities.

Passes and Permissions

Feature Enhancement

+ Create Passes to Content that Allow for Deletion

Administrators can now optionally create a pass that allows for Read/Write/Delete permissions on the associated content. The default setting has not changed and is still Read only.

Frequently Asked Questions

Did this feature change any existing product workflows or behavior?

Yes. In previous releases, ticket permissions were Read-Only and Read/Write. Adding the Delete permission allows for full collaboration between users via passes.

Recycle Bins

Recycle Bin improvements include the following:

- Replacing shared Recycle Bins for Users, Courses, and Organizations with individual Recycle Bins for each User, Course, or Organization
- Scheduling Recycle Bin retention and purging
- Setting the Recycle Bin View Policy

Providing Individual Recycle Bins for Users, Courses, and Organizations

The Recycle Bin capabilities have been improved to replace shared Recycle Bins for Users, Courses, and Organizations with individual Recycle Bins for each User, Course, or Organization. If the administrator has enabled the Recycle Bin feature for an area, the Recycle Bin folder will be located within each User, Course, or Organization folder.

Users will be able to empty their own Recycle Bins.

Scheduling Recycle Bin Retention and Purging

To better manage the growth of the Content Collection and related hardware costs, system administrators can now define a system-wide schedule for purging old files from the Recycle Bins. Administrators can define both the number of days that deleted files will be kept in the Recycle Bins and the specific time of day to perform the purge.

Setting the Recycle Bin View Policy

The **Recycle Bin View Policy** setting enables administrators to control default read access to Recycle Bin folders. Administrators can allow only the owner of the parent folder or both the owner and the user who is deleting the item to view the contents. Regardless of the option selected, users will retain existing permissions on the item being deleted but will not gain permissions on other files. This setting is especially useful in cases where many users share a common content area, such as the Institution folder. In these cases, it may be beneficial to define an explicit set of users.

This setting also applies differently to shared Recycle Bin folders than to individual Recycle Bin folders. When the **Recycle Bin View Policy** is set to **No Special Permissions**, shared Recycle Bins are visible to all users while individual Recycle Bins are visible only to the owner of the Recycle Bin and to users with explicit permissions on that folder.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where does this feature appear?

Recycle Bins for each Content Area are enabled from the Administrator Panel under **Content Management** by clicking **Content Area Management** and then **Manage Recycle Bins**. Clients who already have the Content Collection and are upgrading to this release will see an additional option for activating user, Course, and organization Recycle Bins.

Recycle Bin retention and purge settings are configured from the Administrator Panel under **Content Management** by clicking **Content Area Management** and then **Recycle Bin Settings**.

The Recycle Bin View Policy setting is configured from the Administrator Panel under **Content Management** by clicking **Content Area Management** and then **Recycle Bin Settings**.

The quota for the individual Recycle Bins is shared with the quota for the parent folder, which is set from the Administrator Panel under **Content Management** by clicking **Content Area Management** and then **Default Folder Creation Settings**.

Did this feature change any existing product workflows or behavior?

Users already using Recycle Bins will not notice any significant changes to the experience. What users will notice is that the behavior of managing individual Recycle Bins is more in line with their expectations.

Recycle Bins are more secure than in previous releases. Recycle Bin is now a special folder and does not function the same as other folders. When files are moved into a Recycle Bin, their permissions are changed to inherit the permissions from the Recycle Bin itself. Only those who can manage the Recycle Bin, the original owner of the file, and the user who recycled the file may restore the file. All other users can only see the file listed. This prevents other users with access to a Recycle Bin from viewing or restoring files to which they did not originally have access.

How does the new Recycle Bin affect existing Academic Suite or Blackboard Learn clients?

For clients who are licensing the content management capabilities for the first time or upgrading from systems where the Recycle Bins had not been activated, individual Recycle Bins will be created when Recycle Bins are activated.

For clients who have previously activated Recycle Bins for Users, Courses, or Organizations, the Recycle Bin behavior will not change automatically. Administrators will have the option to activate individual User, Course, or Organization Recycle Bins from the Administrator Panel under **Content Management** by clicking **Content Area Management** and then **Manage Recycle Bins**.

After Individual Recycle Bins have been activated, any existing content in the shared Recycle Bins will not be purged automatically. Users can still access the shared Recycle Bins. Existing permissions are respected and users will be able to restore files from the shared Recycle Bins. Administrators will need to use existing capabilities to determine their plan for moving or deleting that content.

As an existing Academic Suite or Blackboard Learn client, can I go back to shared Recycle Bins after I've turned on the new functionality?

No. Once the new individual Recycle Bins have been activated for an area, it is not possible to revert to shared Recycle Bins.

After Individual Recycle Bins have been activated, can users still access the original, shared Recycle Bins?

Yes. After Individual Recycle Bins have been activated, users can still access the shared Recycle Bins. Existing permissions are respected and users will be able to restore files from the shared Recycle Bins.

Search Content

Feature Enhancement

+ Improved Discovery of Shared Content

Users can now more easily search for shared content directly from the Content Collection tab. Clicking **Search Content** in the left-hand frame provides access to Basic, Advanced, Portfolio, and previously Saved Searches.

Views and Navigation

Feature Enhancement

+ Elevation and Persistence of Breadcrumb Trail

The Breadcrumb trail was moved to the very first line of the screen to make it easier for users to navigate the Content Collection. Unlike in Release 8.0, the breadcrumb is consistent across all screens so that the user can navigate anywhere in the Content Collection for any location.

+ New Thumbnail View

As in Course Files, users in the Content Collection can switch between **View List**, which lists the files in a directory, and the new **View Thumbnails**, which shows a resizable thumbnail of image files. All non-image files will display the appropriate icon for the file type. Clicking a file's icon displays a new quick view of the file including its image, file size, enabled features, and comments.

+ Collapsible Menus

The menus in the left frame of Content Collection are now collapsible. Users also have the ability to hide individual features. This allows users to hide the areas that they access less frequently.

Feature Change

Separation of Line-Item Functions and Stand-Alone Functions

- The Add Item, Start Workflow, and Add Folder functions were moved to the more prominent page header of the Content Collection.
- Line-item functions such as Copy, Delete, and Move were moved close to the grid for a tighter integration between files and folders and their immediate functions.

File/Folder-Specific Functionality Consolidation

Line-item functionality has been moved from various places within the grid to one contextual menu per file or folder. Everything that you can perform against a file or folder is now located in this one common area to make for a much simpler and easier user experience. The contextual menu significantly reduces the number of clicks required to complete file management tasks.

Better Placement of the Short-cut View

Users may switch between a folder view and a shortcut view of their folder listing in the menus in the left frame of Content Collection. This allows users to hide the areas that they access less frequently. In Release 8.0, this link was buried at the bottom of the menu. This link has been elevated to an icon at the very top of the menu to make switching between views much more user-friendly.

Outcomes Assessment Features

All users who have licensed the outcomes assessments capabilities of Blackboard Learn will enjoy a more powerful assessments experience in Release 9.1.

The following outcomes assessments features have been enhanced or added to Release 9.1:

- [Artifacts](#)
- [Batch Operations](#)
- [Criteria List Operators](#)
- [Deployments](#)
- [Gradable Content Alignment](#)

Artifacts

Artifact template builders now have more control over the appearance of artifact templates and Students will have a more intuitive interface to respond to artifact requests.

Feature Enhancement

+ Additional Artifact Management Capabilities

Artifact Template builders can choose to reveal or hide certain sections of the request from recipients. This capability allows users to provide the proper amount of information to Students. In particular, unused sections can be hidden so that the recipient does not view a cluttered page.

In addition, request instructions can now contain rich text attributes such as italicized text, ordered lists, and multimedia elements such as video, images, or audio. This provides builders with the flexibility that they need to create instructions that will help recipients successfully submit the artifact.

The preview tool has been updated to provide a faithful reproduction of how the request will appear to recipients. This is a vital enhancement that allows builders to quickly iterate through intermediate versions of a template. It will also save time by eliminating the need for builders to send sample requests to themselves for review.

The disclaimer text that appears to recipients can now be customized. This enhancement allows the institution to create disclaimers that are appropriate for each request and is especially important when Institutional or Educational Review Board oversight mandates specific disclaimer language.

Finally, the builder has additional control over when recipients can resubmit an artifact. To save clients the effort and time of accidentally reviewing extraneous artifact submissions, builders can choose to not allow resubmissions after an evaluation of the Artifact has been saved or published.

+ More Intuitive Interface Artifact Response Interface

Artifact recipients can view and respond to an Artifact request from one page. Additionally, all of the content sections are expanded by default so that essential tasks can be scanned quickly. This makes it easier for Students to understand what is required of them and should result in higher response rates.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where does this feature appear?

Outcomes Artifact Templates are accessed from the Unit, Program, Course, Educational Experience, and Workspace context homepages that are found on the Outcomes tab.

Outcomes Artifacts can be accessed under the **Portfolios** link on the Content Collection tab.

Did this feature change any existing workflows?

The tasks required to complete and submit an Outcomes Artifact have been consolidated onto one page.

Which sections can be hidden from recipients?

The following sections can be hidden from artifact recipients:

- Collect Evidence
- Associated Standards, Objectives, and Goals
- Rubrics

These correspond to the Build, Associated Standards, Objectives, and Goals and Rubrics tabs, respectively, that are displayed to the Artifact Template Builder.

Can the disclaimer be customized for each Artifact Template?

Yes. Disclaimer customization occurs per Artifact Template. This is an improvement over the previous capability in which any changes made to the language pack editor affected all Artifact Templates.

Batch Operations

The Outcomes batch operations have been enhanced to allow administrators to be even more productive.

Feature Enhancement

+ Batch Delete Outcomes Entities Directly from the User Interface

Outcomes administrators now can batch delete Outcomes entities directly from the user interface without having to contact the Blackboard Managed Hosting. This new operation will save clients a great deal of time and is as simple as the other batch operations (add and edit) available to them in previous releases.

+ Batch Processing Notifications

Administrators no longer have to wait for Blackboard Learn to process a batch file before continuing their work. For all add, edit, and delete batch actions, Outcomes administrators will receive immediate feedback that an uploaded batch file has been queued for processing. They then can continue to perform other tasks in the system. When the batch operation is complete, they will receive an email indicating the processing status (success or failure) for each record.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where do these enhancements appear in the Product?

Batch deletion is available from the Administrator Panel under **Outcomes Assessment** by clicking **Batch**. The **Batch Delete** option is located in the contextual menu of each Outcomes entity.

The message that tells the user that their file has been queued for processing appears at the top of the same page after the batch operation has been submitted.

Did this feature change any existing workflows?

This feature introduces a new capability that allows batch deletion. The practical impact to users is minimal because the workflow is enabled by selecting the **Batch Delete** option in the contextual menu of the Outcomes entity. Additionally, the System Tasks Status page (available from the Administrator Panel under **Tools and Utilities** by clicking **Logs** and then **System Tasks Status**) will now list batch actions that are in process or have been completed.

Which Outcomes entities can be batch deleted?

Batch deletion is now available for the following Outcomes entities:

Contexts	Person Records and Affiliations	Standards, Objectives and Goals	Memberships
Units	Person Records	Standards	Courses Memberships
Programs	Course Sections Affiliations	Standards Categories	Educational Experiences Memberships

Contexts	Person Records and Affiliations	Standards, Objectives and Goals	Memberships
Courses	Educational Experience Sections Affiliations	Unit Goals	Programs Memberships
Course Sections	Programs Affiliations	Program Goals	Units Memberships
Educational Experiences	Units Affiliations	Course Objectives	Workspaces Memberships
Educational Experience Sections		Educational Experience Objectives	

Criteria List Operators

Outcomes administrators will have more flexibility when creating distribution lists. A distribution list builder can create criteria lists using the new sub-string match and logical negation operators.

Feature Enhancement

+ New Sub-String Criteria List Operator

The sub-string operator matches attributes that start with, end with, or contain a user supplied text string. The text search operators will allow users to take advantage of naming conventions that are used to categorize Course Sections, Programs, and other components in the institutional hierarchy.

+ New Negation Criteria List Operators

The logical negation operators will allow more complex criteria logic. The negation operators available to the user depend on the attribute type that is selected. For example, attributes of value type Unique ID have only the Does Not Equal negation operator available.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where does this feature appear?

Criteria are defined for existing Criteria Lists from the Outcomes tab by clicking **Discover**, **Distribution Lists**, and then **Criteria** in the contextual menu for that list.

Did this feature change any existing workflows?

The change in workflow is very minimal. Users will now see additional operators in the operator drop-down lists when creating criteria lists

Are these new operators available to all attributes?

No. Numeric and date attributes do not have an associated negation operator because the preexisting operators allow for negation.

Is the sub-string match case sensitive?

No. The sub-string match ignores case.

Deployments

Users now will be able to deploy assessment instruments with less effort and be confident that they are reaching the intended recipients.

Feature Enhancement

+ Schedule Deployments and Reminders

Users can specify a future start or end date for a deployment. The deployment settings can be changed later if the deployment has not started or ended.

Reminders can be scheduled to be sent to recipients who have not yet completed a deployed instrument. The reminder start time can be a specific time and date or made relative to the deployment start or end dates. Additionally, users can specify that a reminder be sent on a recurring basis after the initial reminder is sent.

These improvements reduce the amount of time required to manage a deployment and allow users to focus on more important tasks such as creating messages for deployment recipients.

+ New “Wizard-like” Deployments Process

Users now have a tabbed interface with which to create a deployment. Each tab is focused on a set of related sub-tasks. Users can access each tab in any order and have the option to save, exit, and return to their work.

The new tabbed interface makes it easier for the user to focus on specific deployment sub-tasks. This results in a less overwhelming experience and will lead to fewer user errors.

+ Message Preview

Users can preview deployment messages to see them as a recipient would. In preview mode, placeholder variables are replaced with the value (if known in advance) that recipients will see. The system will generate a warning if any placeholder variables are overwritten.

This preview capability provides an additional layer of quality control for users. This will result in less errors and fewer resent deployments.

+ Recipient Verification

Users can review the email addresses or names (if available) of deployment recipients before a deployment starts. In a small scale deployment, this capability allows the user to quickly identify whether an intended recipient is missing or an unintended recipient has been included. For larger deployments, this capability can be used to spot check if the recipients have been correctly identified.

Users also have the option to send an email to themselves and other Outcomes users that contains summary information about the deployment. Users with the proper entitlements will also be able to view the email addresses of deployment recipients.

Finally, a deployment manager can add new deployment recipients after a deployment has started. If any duplicate recipients are mistakenly added after a deployment is running, the system will not send out duplicate instruments.

These capabilities are safeguards that decrease the likelihood of erroneous deployments and their unintended consequences.

Frequently Asked Questions about Deployments

Where does this feature appear?

This feature is accessed from the same touch points (instrument creation tabbed interface, instrument landing page, and deployment list page) that led to the single-page deployment process in previous releases.

Did this feature change any existing workflows?

Deployment tasks no longer exist on the tabbed interface used to create an instrument. When the instrument is complete, users are taken from the instrument creation interface to the instrument deployment interface. The interface separates the tasks over four tabs.

Which messages have the preview capability?

The Notification Method and Automated System Response messages have preview capabilities.

What happens if there are many names in the deployment when the user chooses to review the recipient list?

The recipient list is displayed in a scrollable popup window.

What are the ways in which a new recipient can be added to an already running instrument deployment?

New recipients can be added using an uploaded file (survey deployments only) or an existing criteria distribution list.

Gradable Content Alignment

Instructors can align content items with Outcomes goals and objectives. Instructors will have the option to align gradable content found in their Courses to Outcomes Course objectives. An assessment director will be able to create reports that provide a snapshot in time of how learning goals are being addressed.

This feature lets an institution show how desired learning goals are being addressed and in which classes this is being done. It replaces current manual processes that are labor intensive and difficult to enforce. Additionally, this feature is a prerequisite for the evidence collection capability that most clients have requested. By allowing this capability now, clients will have the opportunity to create a wealth of alignments from which to draw evidence of learning outcomes.

Feature Enhancement

+ Course Delivery Content Aligned to Outcomes Course Objectives

Instructors can now align Outcomes Course objectives to individual Course delivery Course content. The objectives come from the Outcomes Course Sections that have been associated to the Course. Instructors can filter by Outcomes Course Section and Course objective type to make the appropriate alignment.

+ Course Objectives Report

Instructors can access a Course Coverage Detail report. This report shows the Instructor which objectives have been made available to the Course and how many of them have been covered. It also shows which content types are used to cover the objective.

+ Program Goals Report

Outcomes managers have access to two new coverage reports. In the Program Coverage Overview report, for each program goal in a program, the report displays how many of the Course objectives that are aligned to that goal are covered or not covered for a given Course delivery Course. This is done for each Course delivery Course that the program connects to indirectly.

The Program Course Overview report provides the same information as the Course Coverage report, but it spans all Courses that are aligned to the Program.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where does this feature appear?

Instructors can align gradable content to Outcomes Course objectives. The objective alignment interface can be accessed from the content object's contextual menu. Completed alignments are viewable in the Edit View.

Can Students view aligned Course objectives?

Yes. Instructors can enable or disable this privilege.

Which content types can be aligned to Outcomes Course objectives?

The following content types can be aligned to Outcomes Course objectives:

- Assignments
- SafeAssignments
- Self and Peer Assessments

- Surveys
- Tests
- Test Questions
- Blogs
- Journals
- Discussion Forms
- Discussion Threads
- Wikis

Users can align to objectives from the content's contextual menu or from the Grade Center column that corresponds to the gradable content.

Did this feature change any existing workflows?

This feature introduces a new workflow that allows the user to align gradable content to Outcomes Course objectives.

Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 1 (SP1)

This addendum is designed to supplement Understanding the Change from Blackboard Academic Suite 8.0 to Blackboard Learn 9.1 in order to provide information on the features and functions of Blackboard Learn™, Release 9.1, Service Pack 1 (SP1).

Blackboard Learn 9.1 Service Pack 1 (SP1) includes enhancements and innovations that are grouped in the following categories:

- [Course Delivery](#)
- [Community Engagement](#)
- [Content Management](#)
- [Outcomes Assessment](#)
- [System Administration](#)

Course Delivery Features

Assessments

Creating and taking Tests have several enhancements to reduce errors and increase efficiency.

- Test-takers are reminded to submit answers before they are allowed to leave a test.
- Random Blocks and Question Sets are both available for instructors to add groups of questions to tests. Random Blocks pull questions into a test from a pool based on certain criteria. They are dynamic and reflect changes to the question pool. Question Sets are static and are made up of specific questions selected to be in the Question Set used in the Test.
- Question and response statistics are displayed for each question on the Tests Statistics page. For K12 licensed clients, Standards that are aligned to test questions are viewable from this centralized location.

Copying and Moving Items

Move and Copy are now two distinct options for content items. This allows items that cannot be copied such as Tests, Surveys, and Assignments to be moved to another location.

Course Links

When Course Links are created, the link and the location are automatically populated, providing consistency across the link name and location.

Discussion Board

The Discussion Board has two enhancements to streamline grading and create consistency across all collaborative tools.

- Instructors can clearly identify and grade users who are members of Groups participating in group discussions.
- Instructors can enter grades, comments, and feedback when viewing Discussions similar to the experience in Wikis Blogs, and Journals.

Grade Center

The Grade Center has been enhanced to improve grading efficiencies and reduce errors.

- Instructors are prompted to save or delete specific Grade Center columns when deleting a Group with gradable Blogs, Journals, Wikis, or Discussion Forums or Threads.
- Instructors navigating away and then back to the Grade Center in one login session are returned to the last scroll point they viewed or graded in the grid.
- Instructors can color code Grade Center cells that meet certain criteria such as grade threshold, exempted grade and so on. This new feature helps instructors spot trends and action areas in large Grade Centers.

Learning Modules

Items hidden in the table of contents in Learning Modules are made unavailable so they cannot be accessed directly. Additionally, Learning Modules have been enhanced so that when they are copied, links to any tests, assignments, or surveys, are created.

Mashups

Mashup links are now visible when the Text Editor is off.

Standards and Alignments

Standards that have been aligned to test questions can be viewed from the Test Statistics page, providing teachers with a centralized location to view question and response statistics as well as alignments.

Text Editor

The text editor allows users to select right-to-left or left-to-right language orientation of text.

Community Engagement Features

Modules

Availability and role settings, as well as custom layouts for modules and tabs, are preserved upon upgrade. The following user defined settings are preserved:

- Tabs
- Tab Groups
- Modules
- Tab Modules – default layouts
- Tab Modules – user layouts

Administrators have the ability to fix modules to the top row of a page, ensuring high-priority modules will always appear in the desired location. Fixed modules cannot be moved or deleted by users, even on user-customizable tabs.

Administrators can control the availability of modules by date and time, allowing for time sensitive content to be scheduled for release, removing the need to set availability manually.

My Organizations Module

The My Organizations module now has all the same customization features as the My Courses module.

Users have the ability to re-order their courses or organizations in the My Courses and My Organizations modules, adding another level of personalization to the modules.

Notifications

Notifications are now processed in priority order. For example, Due or Past Due notifications are sent before the thousands of "new content" notifications. The priority of a notification is determined internally based on factors such as due date and message type.

RSS Support

Blackboard Learn now supports updated RSS infrastructure including support for contemporary, as well as legacy syndication formats including RSS 1.0, RSS 2.0, Atom 0.3, and Atom 1.0.

User Identification and Avatars

When logged in, users now have a visual indicator that displays their name and avatar if avatars are available in the system.

Content Management Features

Navigation and Shortcuts

The Shortcut View takes up less space vertically to reduce scrolling. A Bookmark link has been added for immediate access to bookmarks. Jump To... and Search Content have also been added to the left side for consistency and improved access.

Breadcrumb Navigation uses the separator between folders as an active button to open a drop-down menu. Items in the drop-down include all the folder's associated subfolders, making navigation in the folder hierarchy much faster. The Content Collection breadcrumb brings users to the "top" folder where they can select any of the content areas.

The current folder name is not displayed in the title with the content area name, and basic operations such as edit, set permissions, and bookmark can be performed from a contextual menu on the current folder.

Sharing Content using Email

When emailing content to users has the To, CC, and BCC labels are now buttons that allow selecting individual users, courses or organizations, a group, or roles within the course or organization.

The system will now check that recipients have access to the emailed files or folders. Users will be warned if recipients do not have access to read the files. If recipients do not have access to read the files, the system can automatically set read permissions after confirmation with the user.

WebDAV

Instructions for setting up and using WebDAV have been improved to be clearer and give specific operating system instructions where possible.

Automatic Web Folder opening has been restored for Windows Internet Explorer on Windows XP and Windows Vista with SSL (HTTPS). Users may have to re-authenticate in the Web Folder client. Users with Windows 7 cannot open Web Folders due to a Microsoft bug. Users that are not connecting with SSL have instructions provided in the user interface.

Outcomes Assessment Features

Batch Uploading

Course-to-program associations can be made using a batch file. Standards, objectives and goals can be aligned using a batch file.

Adding and modifying system data can be done with the same batch file operation.

Curriculum Maps

Curriculum Maps are now easier to navigate and edit. A warning appears to users if they attempt to navigate away from an open curriculum map before saving their work. Curriculum Maps can now be moved and copied. Comments entered in Curriculum Map cells now appear in 360° Reports.

Evaluation

The evaluation process is now much easier for users who rate artifacts and portfolios. The list of submissions now has contextual information about existing evaluations including how many evaluations there are, who last evaluated the submission, when it was last evaluated and on in progress evaluations. The Evaluate page includes the rubric directly on the page along with the artifacts being assessed.

Improvement Project Templates and Modules

Improvement Project templates can be more fully customizable, putting all aspects under users' control.

Improvement Projects and Initiatives listed on Unit pages link to their respective project and initiative pages.

Moving

Users can copy and move improvement initiatives to locations to which they have permission to do so.

Users can copy and move improvement projects to locations to which they have permission to do so.

System Administration

Building Blocks

Developers can improve Building Block performance and data persistence by adding requests for installing Building Block specific database objects to their Build Blocks. A tool which allows the System Administrator to approve or deny installation of Building Blocks which request creation of database objects is also provided.

Administrators experience improved dialog notification for Build Block management actions and retention of persisted data and location of upgraded Building Blocks.

Improved Disk Storage Information

System Administrators are provided with an improved display of disk storage information.

Open Database Schema

Database Schema information can be automatically generated by the Learn application allowing system administrators to perform more affective troubleshooting, reporting and analytics on their institutional data. For more information see the System Administrator Manual available from Behind the Blackboard.

Search

Administrators can more easily find users and courses using two new search fields, Student ID and Data Source

Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 2 (SP2)

This addendum is designed to supplement Understanding the Change from Blackboard Academic Suite 8.0 to Blackboard Learn 9.1 in order to provide information on the features and functions of Blackboard Learn™, Release 9.1, Service Pack 2 (SP2).

Blackboard Learn 9.1 Service Pack 2 (SP2) includes enhancements and innovations that are grouped in the following categories:

- [System Administration](#)
- [Partner Integration](#)

System Administration Features

New fields “Suffix” and “Other Name”

To improve the usability of sorting for countries where a last name prefix (e.g. “van der”) is common but should not be used for sorting, additional user information fields, `suffix` and `other name`, have been added.

In some locales, the `suffix` might be used for {Jr., Sr., II, III, etc.}, while in other locales it will be used for last names which contain multiple words like Van der Waals where “Waals” is the last name and “Van der” is the suffix (a.k.a Last Name Prefix).

The `other name` field provides for additional flexibility and freedom. Administrators can use this field to indicate a user's nickname, additional id, or an entirely different purpose which meets their needs.

Renaming the fields

To change how these new fields are displayed on the user creation screen, administrators must use the Language Pack Editor to modify the `user_column_access.properties`. Each new field has two properties that can be edited:

- Suffix (`suffix.default_display_title`, `suffix.display_title`)
- Other Name (`othername.default_display_title`, `othername.display_title`)

This can also be done from **System Admin** tab, under **Customize User Information**.

Sorting

The administrator can modify the `LocaleSettings.properties` file in each Language Pack to modify the sorting and display order of user names. Using this file, names can be sorted in any order necessary for the locale. For example, a Dutch administrator might use

```
LOCALE_SETTINGS.COLUMN_ORDER=title,givenName,middleName,suffix,familyName,otherName
```

to display the last name prefix correctly in a student search. The same administrator might also use

```
LOCALE_SETTINGS.SHORT_SURNAME={6} {3}, {1}
```

to do the same thing in the Grade Center and related screens. These examples use the conventions set forth in the comments of the `LocaleSettings.properties` file.

Snapshot, Building Blocks, Web Services

If your institution adopts `suffix` or `other name`, and currently utilizes the snapshot utility or integrations through Building Blocks and web services, these integrations must be updated to include this new data. For reference, the six name fields (plus UserInfo getter function names) are included below:

- title (`getTitle`)
- firstname (`getGivenName`)
- middlename (`getMiddleName`)
- lastname (`getFamilyName`)
- othername (`getOtherName`)
- suffix (`getSuffix`)

Installer enables /Courses content area when upgrading to 9.1.

In 9.1 SP1 HF1 an improvement was added that enables the “/courses” content area during installation. This particular improvement is also included in 9.1 SP2. The improvement prevents failed upgrades and other undesirable behavior when coming from Learn 9.0 installations. After running the updater, the administrator has the ability to disable the “/courses” content area again. Instructors are then prompted to choose a default Course Directory when trying to add course content for the first time.

CaféScribe Building Block

Powered by Follett Higher Education

The CaféScribe Blackboard Building Block™ enables professors to assign and students to acquire CaféScribe digital textbooks with a single click within the Blackboard Learn environment. Once there, students and professors can read, highlight, annotate, share notes and perform other activities.

The Building Block is available for all markets.

After installation, the Building Block is “Unavailable” by default. It is free to all eligible clients, so any adopting school would simply need to make the Building Block “Available” and agree to the Term & Conditions to begin using it. The integration enables instructors to create links to specific eBook content as a new content type within a Blackboard course, so the “create content” drop down box is the only location within the user interface where this option is viewable. To verify that the Building Block was installed properly, make sure that “Add CafeScribe Content” is an option under “Add Interactive Tool”.

More information is available at <http://www.blackboard.com/CafeScribe/Resources/FAQ.aspx>

Other Building Blocks

NBC Archives on Demand Building Block updated to version 3.0.6 and has been bundled with Service Pack 2.

Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 3 (SP3)

This addendum is designed to supplement Understanding the Change from Blackboard Academic Suite 8 to Blackboard Learn 9.1 in order to provide information on the features and functions of Blackboard Learn™, Release 9.1, Service Pack 3 (SP3).

Blackboard Learn 9.1 Service Pack 3 (SP3) includes enhancements and innovations that are grouped in the following categories:

- [Course Delivery](#)
- [Community Engagement](#)
- [System Administration](#)

Course Delivery Features

Adaptive Release

Instructors can now set Adaptive Release rules using a calculated column. Categories for each item in the Grade Center appear in the **Select a Grade Center column** drop-down list. This helps instructors better use adaptive release rules for teaching and learning such as a scenario of deploying selected remedial content to students that do not pass 70% threshold in a calculated column.

Announcements

New Announcements now appear directly below a repositionable bar. Priority Announcements can be moved above the bar so they always appear first in the list. Students do not see the bar.

Assessments

Instructors now have the ability to view question numbers while building and editing assessments. Questions can be referenced by number throughout the assessment and can be used to sequence questions in an assessment.

Early Warning System

Instructors can now set Early Warning System rules using a calculated column. Categories for each item in the Grade Center appear in the **Select a Grade Center column** drop-down list. This helps instructors better use Early Warning System settings for teaching and learning by using calculated columns for measuring groups of gradable items or monitoring specific progress points in a course.

Grade Center

Several features in the Grade Center have been enhanced to improve communication between the instructor and students and make navigation easier.

Feedback and Comments

To augment the existing ability to download columns from the Grade Center and grade offline, Instructors can now include comments in the download. Comments can be added or edited offline, and are associated with the grade when the column information is uploaded to the Grade Center.

The full features of the Text Editor are now available for feedback to users and Grading Notes from the Grade Details page and within the Grade Center. The Text Editor can also be used for feedback on Tests, Assignments, Group Assignments, Blogs, Wikis, Journals, and posts to the Discussion Board. Incorporating all the features of the Text Editor allows instructors to leverage the full range of functions for formatting text and adding external links, attachments, images, Mashups, and multimedia to Feedback and Grading Notes.

Students are able to view the feedback added using the Text Editor on their My Grades page.

Needs Grading Page

Instructors can access assignment and test attempts that need grading from a new Needs Grading page accessed in the Grade Center section of the Control Panel. On the Needs Grading page, instructors can view how many attempts are ready for grading and sort and filter the items. Attempts are placed in a queue for easy navigation among items when grading or reviewing. Once an attempt is graded, it no longer appears on the Needs Grading page.

Smart Views

Smart Views added as Favorites appear as an indented list in the Grade Center section of the Control Panel.

Column Delete Alert

When groups with graded Blogs, Journals, Wikis, or Discussion Boards are deleted, an alert appears prompting the instructor to save or delete the corresponding Grade Center columns. Managing columns for groups becomes part of the same process as deleting groups.

Text Editor

The symbol font is removed from the Text Editor and a symbol picker has been added.

Community Engagement Features

Modules

Users can browse and search for modules to add to their My Institution Page and Notifications Dashboard.

System Administration

Course Quota Updates

Course Quota changes can now be made through the Quotas page accessed from the contextual menu next to a course name in the Courses list on the Administration Panel. Options are now available for Course Quota and Legacy Files.

Different values can be entered for Courses and Legacy Files. The value will also appear in the Content Collection or Course Content Quota page for each course. The value can be changed from those pages and the change will appear from both the Course page and the Administration page. The value entered from the Administration panel is the default for newly created courses once the value is set.

Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 4 (SP4)

This addendum is designed to supplement Understanding the Change from Blackboard Academic Suite 8.0 to Blackboard Learn 9.1 in order to provide information on the features and functions of Blackboard Learn™, Release 9.1, Service Pack 4 (SP4).

Blackboard Learn 9.1 Service Pack 4 (SP4) includes enhancements and innovations that are grouped in the following categories:

- [Course Delivery](#)
- [Community Engagement](#)
- [Outcomes Assessment](#)
- [Blackboard Connect](#)
- [System Administration](#)

Course Delivery

Support for Common Cartridge

Common Cartridge 1.0 and 1.1 are integrated into Blackboard Learn. Course content packages saved in this standard can be imported into Blackboard and course content created in Blackboard can be exported as Common Cartridge packages.

Important Note: Cartridges exported from Blackboard are automatically exported in Common Cartridge 1.0 unless the **Export as Common Cartridge 1.1** box is checked. In which case, the export is saved as Common Cartridge 1.1.

Learning Tools Interoperability

The Basic Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) is an IMS derivative of the full Learning Tools Interoperability specification that provides a simple integration for instructors to install external learning tools and applications anywhere within their courses. Users do not have to sign in to multiple tools. External content and tools are added to a course the same way a URL is added. The tool or content is launched by clicking the link.

Developers can add Basic Learning Tools Interoperability extensions to their Building Blocks, increasing their market value.

Assessments

Feedback for each answer is now available for Multiple Answer questions.

Community Engagement

Discovering Modules

Users can locate modules to add to their My Institutional page more easily using categories and search. Modules can be categorized by the system administrator. Search is based on key words in the module title and description.

Outcomes Assessment

Curriculum Maps

The workflow for creating and building a Curriculum Map has been improved to reduce the number of clicks so that users go directly to the build tasks from the creation page.

Distribution Lists

The workflow for creating a distribution list and adding criteria to it has been combined into one workflow.

Blackboard Connect

Country Codes Available

Blackboard Learn and Connect are now integrated and support international phone codes. Integration automatically populates email addresses and phone numbers from Learn to Connect. A default country code can be used in the event that no code is provided from Blackboard Learn.

System Administration

Data Sources

System Administrators can navigate to **Administration Panel > System Reporting > Data Sources** to create new data sources and open existing data sources to view details about each type of record currently associated with that data source. Existing keys can also be modified or deleted. Records can be disabled and purged as well.

Search and Select All

A large list of items, such as users or courses, is often returned from a search that uses the filter Not Blank or a generic character in the filter Contains. This list is displayed on multiple pages, the number of which is based on the setting of number of items to display on a page. Checking the top Status box selects all the items displayed on the page, but now gives you the additional option of selecting all items returned in the search. This option allows you to select the entire set so you do not have to go to each page and select all, or set the number of items displayed on the page to a very high number, causing performance problems.

Support for Google Analytics™

Google Analytics™ is a free service offered by Google for mining web traffic data to a website or application. The process for setting up Google Analytics is the same for each Blackboard Learn codeline including 9.0 SP5 and 9.1 SP4 and beyond.

1. Register with Google Analytics (<http://www.google.com/analytics/>)
 - Identify a test server outside your firewall and note its domain name
 - Create a Google Analytics Account
 - Register the domain name of your server through the Google Analytics setup pages
 - Save the script provided by Google Analytics
2. Open `sharedDir"/web_analytics/googleAnalyticsSnippet.vm` (For example `c:/blackboard/content/web_analytics/googleAnalyticsSnippet.vm`), paste your script, and save the file.
3. You can restart Blackboard Learn Services for the changes to take effect immediately or wait until the .vm file cache is refreshed, once every 12 hours.

For information on Secure and Non-Secure sites, visit

<http://www.google.com/support/analytics/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=55483>

Resource Governor

A new command line feature that allows certain performance intensive database operations to run at a lower priority so that they do not consume CPU resources is shipped with SP4. This feature, a resource governor, is turned off by default.

To Activate

First contact Blackboard support. Next, navigate to the main configuration file:

`/blackboard/config/bb-config.properties` and locate this property:

`bbconfig.database.query.prioritization.enabled`, which is set to `False`. Follow the instructions from support to activate.

Once activated the resource governor is added to the Blackboard database. The resource governor regulates the CPU utilization of connections configured to run at a lower priority. Until activated, there is no impact on the system.

The resource governor is only installed on systems that use the following databases:

- Oracle 10 Enterprise Edition
- Oracle 11 Enterprise Edition
- SQL Server 2008 Enterprise Edition

It will **not** be installed for any other versions, and the low-priority connection feature will not take effect on those systems, even if enabled.

To Disable

Set the `bbconfig.database.query.prioritization.enabled` property to `False`. The resource governor can also be turned off at the database level. This does not remove the resource governor from the database, but disables it. It can be enabled at any point.


For Oracle:

1. Log on as the sys dab
`sqlplus "/ sysdba"`
2. Turn off the resource manager by setting it to an empty plan
`alter system set resource_manager_plan = ''`

For SQL:

Bring up the SQL Server Manager.

1. Navigate to Management > Resource Governor
2. Right click on Resource Governor and select Properties
3. Change Classifier Function Name to "None"

 The 9.1 SP4 uninstaller does **not** remove the resource governors. This will be addressed in future service packs. Until it is, the follow artifacts will be left behind after the uninstaller executes:

Oracle

1. A resource plan, called **BB_PLAN**
2. Two consumer groups: **OLTP**, and **BATCH**
3. The database's RESOURCE_MANAGER_PLAN will be set to **BB_PLAN**

SQL Server

1. A workload group, called **groupLowPriority**
2. A classifier function, called **get_priority_workgroup**
3. The resource governor is updated to point to the **get_priority_workgroup** function

To Delete

Delete the Resource Governor if you think it is causing issues on your system that disabling it will not address or if you uninstall your SP4 Learn environment and want to remove the resource governor as well.

For Oracle:

1. Log on as the sys dab
`sqlplus "/ sysdba"`
2. Disable the BB_PLAN resource plan
3. Remove the plan and all its descendants by executing the following code:

```
alter system set resource_manager_plan = '';

exec dbms_resource_manager.create_pending_area();
exec dbms_resource_manager.delete_plan_cascade('Bb_plan');
exec dbms_resource_manager.validate_pending_area();
exec dbms_resource_manager.submit_pending_area();
```

For SQL:

In a production environment, wait for all sessions that are using low-priority connections to complete or simply kill those sessions before attempting to uninstall the resource governor. Otherwise, the drop will fail.

1. Delete the low priority resource group
2. Disable the resource classifier
3. Delete the resource classifier function

```
DROP WORKLOAD GROUP groupLowPriority;
GO

-- Update the Resource Governor in-memory configuration
ALTER RESOURCE GOVERNOR WITH (CLASSIFIER_FUNCTION=null);
GO
ALTER RESOURCE GOVERNOR RECONFIGURE;
GO

DROP FUNCTION dbo.get_priority_workgroup;
GO
```

Global XSS Filtering

To prevent cross-site scripting (XSS) attacks, Blackboard Learn now can globally filter user HTML input. The filtering changes the greater-than sign, ">" to ">" and the lesser-than sign, "<" to "<". This applies to all data entered using HTML forms, such as submitting a Create Discussion Board Forum Message form. Global XSS filter is also applied to file uploads, and will be apparent when rendering the contents of a form submission back to the screen.

Global XSS filtering only occurs for un-trusted user roles such as students. Trusted users, such as course instructors are allowed to post data and will not have their HTML filtered.

Global filtering can be turned on and off for the entire server using the `bbconfig.global.xss.enable` property in `bb-config.properties`. This property is ON by default starting with 9.1 SP4. This property is OFF by default in 9.1 SP1 through 9.1 SP3.

Global filtering can also be turned on or off selectively by URL. When global xss filter is ON for the entire system (`bbconfig.global.xss.enable=true`), filtering can be turned off for specific URLs. This option could be used in the case of a Building Block that allows any user, with trusted role or not, to submit HTML content. To prevent the global xss filter from changing the HTML, the developer can modify the code to get the unfiltered data using the new APIs, or create an exception text file.

To create an exception file, add the URL prefixes, one per line, in a text file named in the `config/internal/bb-xss-global-filter-exceptions.txt`.

For building blocks, the BBUID is embedded in the URL (and is VI specific), so the placeholder `{bbuid}` can be used in the prefix. This will get replaced by the actual BBUID when URLs are being compared against the prefix.

For example `/webapps/bb-my-b2-{bbuid}` would get changed to `/webapps/bb-my-b2-BBLEARN`

Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 5 (SP5)

This addendum is designed to supplement Understanding the Change from Blackboard Academic Suite 8.0 to Blackboard Learn 9.1 in order to provide information on the features and functions of Blackboard Learn™, Release 9.1, Service Pack 5 (SP5).

Blackboard Learn 9.1 Service Pack 5 (SP5) focuses on bug fixes, course files, and security.

Default Maximum Upload Limit

The default size limit for content uploaded through the user interface has been raised from 250 MB to 2.5 GB. When attempting to upload files larger than 2.5 GB, Web Folders must be used.

Known and Resolved Issues

Many critical client-reported issues have been resolved. For a detailed list, see the [Resolved Issues Page](#) of the Maintenance Center.

The list of known issues in Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 is available on the [Known Issues](#) page of the Maintenance Center. The Known Issues page provides a list of the issue ID, description, and resolution path. This page is updated regularly with new client-reported issues.

Course Files Move Utility

Course Files migration is an integral part of the recommended upgrade path to Blackboard Learn 9.1. Full support and a renewed recommendation for using the Move Files Utility for all customers upgrading has been restored.

With the release of Learn 9.1, file management and storage was fundamentally changed. A new file storage system was implemented through the Control Panel of a course and is called "Course Files". Course Files gives users a way to manage their content files, file uploads, and attachments. It also provides a way for users to manage who has permission to see and change files stored here. Course Files provides a very basic file management interface.

For clients with a Content Collection license, Course Files is a window into their Content Collection files through the course Control Panel. All the functions of the Content Collection remain, but easy navigation to and from a course is available.

The Move Files Utility was created to populate the new file storage system with the course files from a legacy course. Since Blackboard Learn 9.1 GA was released, problems related to files moved using the utility after upgrading to 9.1 were discovered. With this release, we have holistically addressed this key area and can renew our recommendation for use of the Move Files Utility for all customers.

Restoring legacy courses in Blackboard Learn 9.1 without using the Move Files Utility places the files in a legacy storage area that is not revealed to users, although the files remain accessible in the course. New material developed after the course is upgraded is stored in the Files or Content Collection area. This does not give a consistent user experience managing files for a course. By using the Move Files Utility to move course files during an upgrade, legacy files are placed in Course Files, providing a consistent way to manage files in a course.

Security

Service Pack 5 addresses three key security vulnerabilities.

- **Cross-site Request Forgery** – Cross-site Request Forgery is an attack that attempts to execute actions on behalf of a user authenticated into Learn. SP5 provides further hardening of Learn Release 9.1 from cross-site request forgery by protecting key parts of the application such as the Grade Center.
- **Cross-site Scripting Attacks** – Cross-site Scripting is an attack where malicious scripts are injected into Learn. This occurs when specially crafted values are entered into a variable of a web page or stored and displayed by the application. Oftentimes, an attacker would need to convince an authenticated user to access a malicious web page or record in order for the attack to occur. Key parts of the application are now protected.
- **Authorization Vulnerabilities** – authorization vulnerabilities in the Address Book, Calendar, Grade Center, Portfolio Comments and Display, and Tasks have been eliminated.

Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 6 (SP6)

This addendum is designed to supplement Understanding the Change from Blackboard Academic Suite 8.0 to Blackboard Learn 9.1 in order to provide information on the features and functions of Blackboard Learn™, Release 9.1, Service Pack 6 (SP6).

The list of issues resolved in Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 SP6 is available on the [Resolved Issues Page](#) of the Maintenance Center.

The list of known issues in Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 is available on the [Known Issues](#) page of the Maintenance Center. The Known Issues page provides a list of the issue ID, description, and resolution path. This page is updated regularly with new client-reported issues.

Blackboard Learn 9.1 Service Pack 6 (SP6) includes enhancements and innovations that are grouped in the following categories:

- [Course Delivery](#)
- [Content Management](#)
- [Community Engagement](#)
- [Outcomes Assessment](#)
- [Partner Integration](#)
- [System Administration](#)

Course Delivery

Needs Grading

Gradable Blogs, Journals, Wikis, and Discussion Board activity can appear in Needs Grading status in the Grade Center and on the Needs Grading page. When an instructor chooses to make an interactive tool gradable, they will also have the option to choose how many interactions will place the item in needs grading status. A Discussion Board forum, for instance, might be set to only appear in Needs Grading status after a student has made three posts, rather than with each individual post.

Timed Assessments

Attempt information for timed assessments includes details on how much time the student spent on the attempt versus how much time was allotted.

Instructors can choose to make the timed assessment save and submit automatically when the timer expires, or to allow the assessment to continue beyond the allotted time.

Test Announcements

If announcements are created for a Test, the date and time of the most recent announcement appears on the Test Options page.

Interactive Rubrics

When creating a rubric, instructors can assign weights to categories, allowing the same rubric to be used across multiple items with different possible points. Rubrics can be imported and exported for use across courses. Existing rubrics in ANGEL and CE8 courses will be converted as part of the course conversion process.

Instructors can associate rubrics when creating gradable content items, including Blogs, Journals, Wikis, Discussion Boards, Assignments, and short-answer, file-response, or essay questions in tests and pools. Rubrics can be associated with multiple items, and all associations can be viewed from the Rubric tool. Multiple rubrics can be associated with an item. The rubrics can be visible to students at any time, or only after grading has been completed.

Instructors can interact with any associated rubric for grading in a grid or list view, and Feedback can be typed for each criteria as well as the entire assessment. Grades calculated using rubrics can be overridden. When a rubric has been used for grading, a report is available to view the results of all content graded with that rubric.

SCORM Engine Integration

Through a co-development partnership with Rustici Software, a new SCORM (Sharable Content Object Reference Model) content player is integrated into Blackboard Learn. This feature will provide users a stable and reliable platform for SCORM content. Along with the new content player is a new report available through the Control Panel to show activity and progress.

Content Management

Adaptive Release Rules Work on Content Collection Items

Adaptive Release now works on Content Collection items that are created within a course and accessed through the Content Collection. Instructors (or those users creating course content) are no longer prompted to give Read access to newly created items. Items that are released at a later date will not show up in a search before they are released.

Important Note: To ensure that adaptive release rules are functioning correctly, courses created prior to Blackboard Learn Service Pack 6 need to be copied, imported, or restored after upgrading. This process updates all links to content within a course and removes specific read permissions from students. Updating the links provides students with access to all files they had previously been granted access to. Removing specific read permissions prevents students from accessing content that they are not allowed see while honoring adaptive release rules.

Desktop Integration

BbDrive must be installed to engage in desktop integration. Once installed, files will automatically open without download. Updates are saved and re-uploaded after a refresh of a Course Content page. Any files that a user has access to will open within their native application. If users have set specific files to open with a specific program, they can open the contextual menu and select open in browser to view the file in a new tab or window. Entire folders can also open right on the desktop to manage files, making deleting multiple files easy for example.

Automatic Student Access to Linked Files

Links to files within courses do not rely on students having read permissions. If a file is linked in a course students enrolled in that course will be able to see it. They will not need explicit read permission.

Community Engagement

Institutional Hierarchy

Administrators can create and manage a hierarchy that reflects institutional organization in order to share and delegate administrative duties. Multiple organizational units within an institution can be given varying degrees of independence in order to manage their courses, organizations, and users. Institutions can support multiple organizational units on a single instance of Blackboard Learn.

Administrators with appropriate privileges can create new Nodes in the hierarchy. Courses, organizations, and users are then associated with the node, and an administrator can be assigned with privileges to manage just those associated objects.

Although Administrators can manually create Nodes and associate objects through the user interface, all of the creation and management of Nodes and the association of courses, organizations, and users to Nodes can be managed through data integration with the student information system.

Flexible System Roles can be used in combination with the hierarchy to create a robust delegated administration that reflects the real-world organization of any institution.

NOTE: The resource bundle properties file `multiinst.properties`, used for customized language packs, is scheduled to be renamed in Blackboard Learn 9.1 Service Pack 8.

Outcomes Assessment

Evidence Collection

Outcomes Assessment users such as assessment coordinators can automatically collect assignments and the related student submissions directly from Blackboard Learn course sections. Once collected, student artifacts of learning can be randomly sampled, evaluated in Outcomes Assessment using a rubric, and reported against. The collection of these student work products in a more automated way greatly eases the burden of assessment on faculty and students, promoting “double-duty” of course work for the purpose of program or institution level assessment.

Evidence is collected into manageable sets and is controlled by Outcomes Assessment users at any level: institution, unit/program, or course. This multi-level approach provides a great deal of flexibility and permits users with different purviews to collect and sample evidence appropriate to their role.

Standard, Objective, and Goal (SOG) Alignment to Course Delivery Content

This enhancement will make it easier for instructors, curriculum designers, and other staff to align content items directly to the appropriate learning outcome. This change will work seamlessly for current Outcomes Assessment clients who have already aligned content to course objectives.

Standard, Objective, and Goal (SOG) Coverage Reports

This new capability will enable users to analyze the extent to which certain standards, objectives, or goals have (or have not) been aligned to the relevant course curriculum. These reports require the alignment of learning outcomes to Blackboard Learn course section content items.

Partner Integration

McGraw-Hill Connect and Create Integration

Instructors will benefit from one-stop teaching and learning through the integration of McGraw-Hill Connect and Create directly within Blackboard Learn. This combination of content and learning tools is easy to use and provides instructors one destination for creating and accessing dynamic online course materials.

McGraw-Hill's solutions, Connect and Create, are now integrated and available directly within Blackboard Learn. Customizable, dynamic educational content and tools from McGraw-Hill enhance and enrich teaching and learning experience. Single sign-on and Grade Center synchronization deliver centralized, immediate access to course content and grades. Compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) ensures that student privacy is protected.

System Administration

Software Updates

Software Updates is located in the System Admin Panel and provides updates specific to your Blackboard Learn installation. If a newer version of Blackboard Learn is available, an indicator will display the number of versions, and you can select which version to download. This includes Service Packs as well as Major Releases. In addition to Blackboard Learn updates, new releases of installed Building Blocks will also be displayed in Software Updates on the System Admin Panel.

To use Software Updates, Blackboard Learn needs to make a secure HTTP access OUT using port 443 to the following servers:

handle.blackboard.com

softwareupdates.blackboard.com

If you are blocking secure HTTP access OUT from your Learn instance, you will need to configure your firewall to enable access to these servers.

The Batch UID Can be Used as a Context Identifier for a Basic Learning Tool Interoperability (LTI) Tool Provider

Previously, the only available option for sending context identifiers was to provide the primary key from within the database BBLEARN. You now have a second option, sending the Batch UID, as a context identifier. The Batch UID is a unique number within the Blackboard Learn installation.

Sending the primary key guarantees that no identifying information about the user or course is being exchanged. Sending the Batch UID guarantees that even if the course or user is deleted and re-added, the same identifying information is being sent to the tool provider. However, depending on the usage of the Batch UID at an institution, it is possible that identifying information, such as a student ID number, may be sent to the tool provider. To determine the best method for your institution, contact the tool provider.

Custom Parameters in Basic Learning Tool Interoperability (LTI) Configuration

An XML configuration is no longer necessary in order to add custom parameters for Basic LTI providers. A new field has been added to the Basic LTI Configuration screen, which permits the Administrator to enter the custom parameters.

Web Services Enabled Automatically for Building Blocks

When using Building Blocks that are bundled, or manually installed and depend on Web Services APIs, permissions are automatically enabled.

Page Scroll Location Maintained During Refresh

The page scroll location is maintained on screens that contain scroll bars if a user scrolls before the page finishes loading. For example, if a user deletes the last item in a content folder with numerous items, and scrolls before the page has finished loading, instead of being returned to the top of the page when the page finishes loading, the user maintains the current page scroll location.

Select All

To prevent potentially huge numbers of items being selected, when a user chooses Select All for a list that has multi-select capability, all of the current items on the page are selected. An option is provided that allows all of the items in the list to be selected.

Student Information System Integration Building Block

The Student Information System (SIS) Integration Building Block was designed to help Administrators create courses and authorize users for the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS). Information provided by the institution is used to create the required entities within the LMS database. The information may come from various sources in varying formats. Once this information is written in an appropriate format, it is loaded into the LMS using the Building Block. This Building Block is intended to provide a simplified alternative to the Blackboard Snapshot tool.

Upgrading to Blackboard Learn from another LMS such as WebCT or Vista is now easier than ever. The Application Administrator has the ability to manage user and course data directly from the UI, whereas the Snapshot tool requires System Administrator access to the application server.

There are three types of Integration available. Although there are three types of Integration, there is not a limit to the number of Integrations a system may have. It is unusual, though possible, to have a variety of Integration types on a single system.

- IMS Enterprise 1.1
- IMS Enterprise 1.1 - Vista
- IMS Learning Information Services

Blackboard recommends that Integrations begin in the Testing status. Selecting this status will allow you to test the Integration, and fix any issues that may arise before committing to the Integration. Once the testing is complete, the status may be set to Inactive or Active. Setting the status to Inactive will bring the data in, however, it will not be visible to users. Setting the status to Active will bring the data in, and it will be visible to users. The status can be changed at any time.

Logging capabilities in an intuitive format are provided as part of the Student Information System Integration Building Block. Logs can be filtered using an advanced search method that includes the type of error, the Integration, and a date range. New log entries are easily visible, with a count attached to the type of log entry. The logs can be refreshed to retrieve the latest count, and details of each type of log.

Note: Creating Organization associations to Institution Nodes using the Institutional Hierarchy SIS Data Integration framework is not supported in SP6. Any attempt to do so will be ignored, and an error logged.

Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 8 (SP8)

This addendum is designed to supplement Understanding the Change from Blackboard Academic Suite 8.0 to Blackboard Learn 9.1 in order to provide information on the features and functions of Blackboard Learn™, Release 9.1, Service Pack 8 (SP8).

The list of issues resolved in Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 SP8 is available on the [Resolved Issues Page](#) of the Maintenance Center.

The list of known issues in Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 is available on the [Known Issues](#) page of the Maintenance Center. The Known Issues page provides a list of the issue ID, description, and resolution path. This page is updated regularly with new client-reported issues.

Blackboard Learn 9.1 Service Pack 8 (SP8) includes enhancements and innovations that are grouped in the following categories:

- [Course Delivery](#)
- [Content Management](#)
- [Community Engagement](#)
- [Outcomes Assessment](#)
- [Partner Integration](#)
- [Building Blocks](#)
- [System Administration](#)

Course Delivery

Course Relationship Management

- **Multi-section management:** Instructors sometimes teach multiple sections of the same course. Merge Enrollments allows system administrators to merge the rosters of those courses into one master course. Merging the rosters allows the instructors teaching multiple sections of the same course to manage the content, course management, and communications tasks for all sections of the course from one central location.
- **Crosslisting:** Schools commonly offer a course under multiple programs. For example, an advanced literature course might be available for credit in an English degree program as well as a Journalism program. Instructors and registrars are challenged with managing student enrollment, grading, and content being used in a single course. Cross listing is the act of delivering two or more courses/sections as a single combined course. In physical world terms, students with different courses listed on their timetables would show up in the same classroom and get taught at the same time. In Blackboard Learn terms, students would see a course they are enrolled in on their **My Courses** tabs, but when clicking to enter it, will share the same course content as all other students across all combined courses.

Term Support

Term support allows administrators to create date-based terms and associate them with a selection of courses. This allows the administrator to align many of the date-based course settings and preferences to multiple courses in batch.

Course-to-Course Navigation

When in a course, click the Action Link next to the course title to jump from course to course to access the same page/tool. For example, if you are in one course's Grade Center, you can jump to the next course's Grade Center easily to complete your grading tasks. As a student, you can jump from one course's announcement page to another.

Student Activity Reports

The **Student Overview for Single Course** report displays an individual student's activity within a course, sorted by date. Data includes the total overall time the student spent in the course as well as detailed information about the student's activity, such as which items and Content Areas the student accessed and the time spent on each. This is accessed as a Course Report by the instructor, and at the system level by the Administrator.

The **Course Activity Overview** displays overall activity within a single course, sorted by student and date. Data includes the total and average time spent per user and the total amount of activity the user had in the course. This is accessed as a Course Report by the instructor and at the system level by the Administrator.

The **User Activity Overview** displays overall system and course activity for all users, including average logins and time spent, and statistics on user activity by course. This is accessed at the system level by the Administrator.

The **Single User Activity Overview** displays all system and course activity for a single user. Data includes total system access time sorted by date and total course time sorted by date or course. Any user such as instructors and their activity can be tracked using this report. This is accessed at the system level by the Administrator.

Administrator may generate reports for any course on the system and all user activity in the system. Instructor reports are limited to their individual courses and the students enrolled in those courses.

Goal, Content Alignment, and Course Performance Reports

All Course Delivery clients can now create and manage Goals to be used in assessing course and student performance. Goals can be entered from the Administrator Panel and then associated to courses.

The Goals tool set has been updated to allow for direct editing, creation, alignment and reporting on Goals. In addition to direct editing, schools can still import K12 NCLB standards (via Academic Benchmarks) or other goals using XML data files.

The new Goals capability is supported with updates to the file system and reporting. The file system has been enhanced to allow you to search for content in the file system based on standards alignment.

Once associated to a course by the Administrator, instructors can align individual content items to Goals in order to produce a Course Performance Report. This report generates three views to help institutions understand what course content is aligned to stated learning objectives to identify gaps, determine how a student is performing against learning objective(s) within a course and determine how the collective student membership within a single course is performing against a single goal/learning objective.

Course Performance displays information showing how a single Blackboard Learn Course performs against a selected set of Goals. Performance targets and a range of acceptable performance for the course can be determined when running the report. Data includes averages for the entire course as well as breakdowns for individual students and goals.

Learner Performance is a student-centric view measuring how a particular student has performed against the stated learning objectives. This is done by reporting their performance against all graded items that were aligned to a goal. At the course level, the instructor can see how the student has performed against goals and content items within that course. Instructors access this view by selecting an individual student within the Course Performance Report. This report is also accessible from the Grade Center.

Goal Performance shows performance against single goal or learning objective. Instructors access this view by selecting an individual goal within the Course Performance Report.

Goal Coverage Reports

Goal Coverage reports show Instructors and administrators how course content aligns to stated learning objectives.

The **Course Coverage Report** displays goals coverage information for a single Blackboard Learn course. Data includes both covered and gap values for all curricular areas that the course is associated with, as well as a breakdown of course items that have been aligned to goals. Instructors and administrators can run this report.

The **Full Coverage Overview** shows curriculum coverage of goals across the entire system. This report displays aggregated coverage information across courses for all active Goal Sets within the selected Source and Goal Type. An overview of the types of content items aligned to these goals is also provided. This report is only available to administrators.

Automated Regrading

Instructors can now fix problematic questions by simply editing the invalid question directly and having all necessary updates flow automatically to the Grade Center.

For any given question, Blackboard now allows instructors to drop, give full credit, change point value, or change the correct answer. After the question has been updated, Blackboard recalculates the score of all submitted assessments that included the updated question, reflects the updates in the Grade Center, and provides notification to both the instructor and optionally to the student for all impacted submissions.

Note: Instructors have the option of saving as new when editing a question in a pool.

Negative Marking

Negative marking allows instructors to apply negative point values for wrong answers on test questions. This allows them to prevent (by penalty) guessing or the selection of egregiously wrong answers.

Course Structures

Blackboard offers Course Structures instructors can use as a launching pad to create a course, organize content, share knowledge, and build communities. Course Structures contain course areas, optional sample content, pedagogical information, and instructions to help instructors design their course. Course Structure content and Course Menu links **are added** to the course's existing content if you elect to add a structure.

Course Themes

Within a course, instructors can apply a Course Theme to match their design preferences and teaching methods. Course Themes add a background image to the course display and change the color of the user interface, including the Course Menu, buttons, and controls. Applying a theme does not affect course content, and users can change the theme again at any time.

The Course Themes feature can be used if:

- the new Bb Learn 2012 Theme is enabled as the default system theme
- or
- an institution's own custom theme has been updated and rebuilt based on the new Bb Learn 2012 Theme is enabled.

Quick Setup Guide

When instructors enter a course initially, a Quick Setup Guide screen appears helping instructors set up a new course. Instructors are initially asked update the name and description of their course and then to apply any changes. Instructors can go on to step two and design their course menu by applying a course structure from over 30 different pedagogically based selections. At this point, instructors can also decide whether to add sample content to the course. Finally, there are links to additional resources to help instructors learn more about building their courses. The Quick Setup Guide will appear every time an instructor enters their course unless it is turned off. When turned off, the Quick Setup Guide can be accessed from the Control Panel under Customizations.

New Default 2012 Theme Upon Fresh Install

A new default theme is set when Blackboard Learn 9.1 SP8 is installed as a “fresh” installation. If you are upgrading from a previous service pack, the default theme you already have will remain. A new theme, Bb Learn 2012 will be added to the Theme and Palette Catalog and may be applied at a later time. The Bb Learn 2012 theme is presented with a soft background with neutral colors. Clutter is removed from view and controls are shown to users when they are needed.

Action Bar Functions in Content Area Have Been Renamed

Build Content remains the same, but the others are renamed to **Assessments**, **Tools**, and **Publisher Content**. This resulted from moving adding tool links to the **Tools** drop-down list and making the naming more generic.

Users Can Choose to Create Link to Course Tool

Instead of adding tool links from the **Build Content** function in a course area, adding tool links is now moved to the newly renamed **Tools** drop-down list and more tools are available in the list.

Add Menu Item Redesigned

The **Add Menu Item** option list for the Course Menu has a new look. The option names are shorter.

New View Grade History Option

A new **View Grade History** option appears in the contextual menu for a column in the Grade Center where users can choose a time period for the history that is shown.

Improvements to Handling Mini-Websites and File Packages

If an instructor links to a HTML file attachment from a course item, access to that HTML file will be granted to all users enrolled in that course. Release 9.1 SP8 will also provide the instructor options to also grant access to other files in the same folder (or selected files in the Content Collection for those licensing content management capabilities) to handle mini websites and packaged content. In SP8 we ensure student access is constrained by Adaptive Release rules, and these rules and access to the files will be propagated along with the files when the course is copied. This means that packages of files that together constitute a mini website can be constructed within a course and controlled by a single index.html entry point.

Content Management

Goal Alignment to Files

Files in the Content Collection or Course Files can be aligned to Goals. It is also possible to view a file's alignment to goals in the file's 360 View.

When adding a file to the course as a file item, an attachment, or link in the Text Editor, it will be possible to search content collection by Goal.

If a file is attached to a content item in a course, the user will have the option of having the content item inherit the alignments on the file at the time of attaching.

Orphaned Content

When a course is deleted, administrators are informed that the course content is marked as orphaned content. Any course folder where the course has been deleted is marked as orphaned content, even though it is possible another course maintains active links to the files in that folder. Use the 360 View option to see if the course folder has files linked to another course.

A visual identifier has been added to a column in this report to indicate the existence of course references to a given orphaned file/folder. This helps the administrator differentiate between obsolete content that can safely be removed from content that needs to be moved to a permanent location to ensure the integrity of existing courses.

Administrators can sort folders in the Orphaned Content report based on whether or not they have linked content (content that is linked in another course). This sorting by reference status facilitates bulk delete or move operations as appropriate.

Archive/Export With Files in Content Collection

In SP8, both Archive and Export now offer the choice to include links or both copies and links to files outside of the Course Files home folder (from the Content Collection). This allows users to make a more complete archive of a course such that external file content can be included in the point-in-time archive. The Manage Package functionality also includes a view into the external content such that users can pick and choose the files they want maintained in the archived/exported package.

Improvements to Handling Mini-Websites and File Packages

If an instructor links to a HTML file attachment from a course item, access to that HTML file will be granted to all users enrolled in that course. Release 9.1 SP8 will also provide the instructor options to also grant access to other files in the same folder or selected files in the content collection to handle mini websites and packaged content. In SP8 we ensure student access is constrained by adaptive release rules and these rules and access to the files will be propagated along with the files when the course is copied. This means that packages of files that together constitute a mini website can be constructed within a course and controlled by a single index.html entry point.

Community Engagement

Institutional Hierarchy

- **Delegation of Tabs and Modules:** As of SP8, the Institutional Hierarchy feature provides the ability to delegate management of Tabs and modules by Node in the institutional Hierarchy. Associating a Tab or Module with a Node provides a Node Administrator (that has been assigned the appropriate System Role with the appropriate privileges) to manage those Tabs and Modules without being given access to manage any other Tabs and Modules not associated with their Nodes.
- **Delegation of Tool/Building Block Availability:** In SP8, System Administrators and Node Administrators have the ability to manage the availability of Tools (including Building Block tools) on a node-by-node basis. A Node's availability settings will apply to any Courses or Organizations associated to that particular Node.

Customized Login Pages Possible for Multiple Brands

Custom login pages used to only be able to be set system-wide, limiting the scope of customization. As of SP8, a separate custom login page can be uploaded for each brand that is linked to a host name, not an institution role. This allows for deeper customization to be done, for example, the nursing school (nursing.school.edu) might have a different theme and custom login page than the engineering school (eng.school.edu).

eCommerce Replaced by eAccounts and ePOS

In 2010 Blackboard announced that the eCommerce features that previously shipped as a component of the Community Engagement license would no longer be supported. With SP8, legacy components of that feature are no longer available in the product. The account management features of the Community eCommerce capabilities have been replaced by **Blackboard Transact eAccounts**. The marketplace features have been replaced by a partner product, **Sequoia ePOS**. If there are any questions about eAccounts or ePOS, please contact the Blackboard Transact account representative for your institution.

Outcomes Assessment

Evaluation Workflow

In 9.1 SP8, the evidence collection evaluation workflow allows:

- Multiple evaluators to evaluate collected evidence using a rubric in Outcomes.
- Reporting on the rubric results from the Blackboard course from which the evidence was collected *without* conducting an additional rubric evaluation in Outcomes.

Reporting Efficiency

All of the pre-built reports that are shipped with Outcomes will now run significantly faster due to a new Extract, Transform, and Load (ETL) process that will change the database tables that are referenced for the pre-built reports.

Custom reports will *not* automatically run against the new ETL tables, but they will continue to function normally. Note, however, that these custom reports *can* be made to work against the ETL tables if you wish to do so, either on your own, or with the help of Blackboard Consulting.

User Experience Enhancements

A Discover Goals interface allows users to select goals from several places within the application.

Goals Update

Standards and objectives are now referred to as Goals.

Goals can be created from any “place” within Outcomes Assessment (e.g. Institution, Units, Programs).

When batch loading or changing goals, clients will be able to use our XML-loading method which has been available with K-12 Standards previously. This batch upload utility is available for system administrators with the necessary privileges.

Goals Coverage Reports

The **Review Related Goals** report shows all relationships that exist within in the system for the selected set of goals. Choose to view all relationships or only relationships to a particular type of goals. The report is only available to administrators with an Outcomes license.

Partner Integration

McGraw-Hill 2.0 Building Block

This Building Block seamlessly integrates McGraw-Hill's Connect, Create, and SimNet solutions within Blackboard Learn, Release 9.1, allowing educators to create and access dynamic online course material. This Building Block enables instructors to incorporate customized course eBooks, LearnSmart study modules, and recorded lectures into their Blackboard courses. Instructors teaching courses on computing applications will be able to leverage SimNet, simulation-based software for teaching and assessing proficiency. Single sign-on and Grade Center synchronization deliver centralized, immediate access to course content and grades. Compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) ensures that student privacy is protected. [Installation instructions](#) are available from Behind the Blackboard.

Kaltura Video Building Block

The Kaltura Video Building Block is a comprehensive solution for your institution's expanding media needs. With the Kaltura Building Block, teachers can easily add video content to course pages, maintain a personal content repository, integrate lecture capture and interact with their students using media. Students can create a personal media gallery, submit video assignments and edit content online.

[Learn more about getting started and to sign up for a free 10GB trial.](#)

Follett CafeScribe Building Block

Give your students the ability to read, study, and collaborate with peers and professors from within Blackboard Learn. Together, Blackboard and CafeScribe give teachers and students the ability to access over 15,000 digital textbooks, delivering benefits to students, faculty, and busy campus technologists as well.

The CafeScribe Blackboard Building Block allows professors to assign and students to acquire CafeScribe digital textbooks with a single click within their Blackboard Learn courses. They can easily highlight passages and add notes or insights within the digital textbook, quickly compile notes and highlights into a powerful study and reference resource, and interact and learn within the digital course material itself by sharing notes and information with other students and professors.

Barnes & Noble NOOK Study Building Block

Barnes & Noble's NOOK Study Building Block allows instructors and students to use NOOK Study directly from the Blackboard course environment and seamlessly integrate NOOK Study eTextbooks into course content. Instructors can integrate NOOK Study eTextbooks into a syllabus and create links to chapters, sections, or pages of books for courses. Students can access e-textbooks through courses and use NOOK Study to read, annotate, and search their eTextbook. This Building Block enables e-commerce for institutions through BN.com or the campus bookstore so that instructors and students can purchase and distribute eTextbooks from within Blackboard.

The Building Block is available to higher education institutions in North America that license Blackboard Learn, Release 8.0 and higher.

After installation, the Building Block is “Unavailable” by default. Once the Barnes & Noble NOOKstudy Blackboard Building Block is installed and made Available, you need to activate the Building Block using the administration page by requesting a license key from Barnes & Noble. Barnes & Noble needs to receive your request as there are behind-the-scenes ecommerce configurations that must be made before the Building Block can be properly used. After you accept the software agreement, receive and enter your license key, you can make the building block available to all courses.

More information on installing and configuring this Build Block is available in their [User Guide](#) available from the [Blackboard's Partnerships Catalog](#).

Internships.com Building Block

Internships.com is the largest marketplace for internships, part-time jobs, and entry-level positions for students. The Internships.com Building Block created by Blackboard provides a powerful resource for students, employers, and educators to optimize and find internship and job opportunities right inside the Blackboard Learn course environment. Use this Building Block to help students succeed inside and outside of the classroom.

With single sign-on access to original content and proprietary career development tools, this free Building Block delivers an integrated career-oriented experience within the Blackboard Learn platform:

- **New My Career** tab: Provides access to all available Internships.com resources in one place inside the Blackboard Learn.
- **My Institution** module: Enables students to search and apply for internships, student jobs and entry-level positions directly from the **My Institution** page.
- **Course Search Tool**: Allows instructors to insert search link within their course.
- **Facebook Integration**: Allows student to repurpose their social network as a professional network by utilizing their existing contacts to find jobs and get introduced to hiring companies.
- **Career Predictor**: Evaluates personal preferences and shows students and job seekers how they can help pursue and secure the right internship or job opportunity.
- **Resume Builder**: Provides students with resume samples and tips.

[Internship.com Building Block installation and administration documentation](#) is available from Behind the Blackboard.

NBC Learn

NBC Learn offers unique collections of video resources, primary sources, historic footage, images, mini-documentaries and text resources designed for use in the classroom. The NBC Learn Building Block enables member institutions to enhance classroom learning by leveraging NBC News collections within their Blackboard Learn courses. The NBC Learn Building Block seamlessly integrates with your current Blackboard installation and enables instructor to embed NBC News content into existing courses for course delivery.

NBC Learn Building Block features include:

- Search NBC Learn by subject area, related topic, or keyword

- Expect regularly updated news content, and short-form, preview playback of videos
- Create user playlists and mashups
- Download video clips and embed them directly in a Blackboard Learn course
- Use video to emphasize specific topics, stimulate thinking, and enliven material
- Screen clips in class
- Use video commenting and rating features
- Read and print full text transcripts
- Students also can complete research in the archives and incorporate clips into multimedia projects

Full, long-form playback of videos and advanced search features can be licensed directly from NBC Learn.

Building Blocks

The General Availability of two new Building Blocks for Blackboard Learn, Release 9.1 was previously announced in October 2011, subsequent to the release of Learn 9.1 Service Pack 6.

These Building Blocks remain available for download from the [Extensions Catalog](#), and are fully supported on Release 9.1 SP8. This previously published information is included here as reference and reminder for those upgrading to Release 9.1 SP8.

Bboogle Building Block

The Bboogle Building Block provides an easy way to integrate licensed Google Apps with Blackboard Learn. Bboogle initiates a single sign-on request to Google Apps so that users can link to any Google App tool from inside their Blackboard Learn courses. Schools that have licensed Google Apps for Education® or Business can use Bboogle to provide users direct access from inside their courses to the content and tools available in Google Apps. Bboogle creates tool links in courses that permit users to go directly to the Google Apps tool they want to use. Instructors can create content item links to Google calendars, sites, and documents, providing direct access to specific items in the Google Apps system. These links can be configured to provide edit permissions to the students in a course for dynamic, collaborative content authoring in the Google Apps system.

In 2009 Blackboard and Northwestern University partnered on an integration to make Google Apps for Education available to students within the Blackboard Learn platform with a single sign on. Developed by Northwestern's Information Technology development team, the Bboogle Building Block has been released and resides on OSCELOT's website as open source to let other institutions use or build on the technology at no cost. That OSCELOT-sponsored version remains available for use by the user community. Understanding the broad use of Google Apps tools and in an effort to provide users with greater efficiencies, Blackboard collaborated further with Northwestern University to refine the Building Block. The updated Building Block focuses on simplifying the installation process and making the Building Block available for international clients (language updates). This updated, supported version for Blackboard Learn is generally available. Blackboard is pleased to further the work of our clients through support and adoption of tools built by the user community.

To access documentation click on the link for the [Bboogle Building Block 2.0 Administrator Guide \(Learn 9.1\)](#) or visit [Behind the Blackboard](#).

About the Paste From Word Mashup Building Block

The Paste From Word Mashup Building Block provides an easy way to paste text from Microsoft® Word into the text editor without bringing Microsoft specific markup with it. This Building Block is a mashup that is added to the text editor. When used to paste text from Word, Microsoft markup is stripped out so the text does not become corrupt and appears as it did in the original Word document. Blackboard originally contributed this Building Block to OSCELOT as an open source project, but now offers a Blackboard-supported version for easier maintenance.

To access documentation click on the link for [Paste From Word Building Block Administrator Guide \(Learn 9.1\)](#) or visit [Behind the Blackboard](#).

Accessing the Building Blocks

Both tools are available to be applied through the Building Block Manager on Release 9.1 Service Pack 4 and above. The Building Blocks can be downloaded from the [Extensions Catalog](#). Search on the names "Bboogle" or "Blackboard Paste From Word Mashup". Documentation for each Building Block is also available via the Extensions Catalog. Future updates to these Building Blocks will also be distributed through the Blackboard Learn Software Updates module for those clients who have the module activated on their system. Note: The Building Block on the Extensions Catalog is supported by Blackboard. The open source version of each Building Block on OSCELOT is unsupported.

System Administration

SIS DATA Integration Framework Improvements

The SIS Data Integration Framework includes the following enhancements:

- Snapshot XML and Flat File Support - Learn ships with a Building Block that registers an integration type supporting snapshot processes.
- Custom Headers - Flatfile (Snapshot) supports custom headers with name mapping and addition of new headers, facilitating migration of ANGEL clients.
- Reuse of Integration Settings - Administrators can export their customized integration settings for import on a different Learn server.
- Terms Support - Administrators can assign terms to course and leverage SIS provisioned course and term relationships. Both LIS 2.0 and Enterprise 1.1 integration types support Terms.
- Merged Courses Support - The SIS integration has information on cross-listed courses and multiple sections of a course. Enterprise 1.1 integration types support merged courses. The LIS 2.0 integration type does not currently support merged courses.
- Logging – Log messages contain the processing timestamp for the event generating the log entry.

Learning Information Services (LIS) 2.0 Support

The Learning Information Services (LIS) 2.0 standard is supported in 9.1 Service Pack 6 and above.

Now supported are Flatfile and Snapshot XML integrations using LIS 2.0.

LIS integration supports the WS Security authorization protocol for LIS web service request authorization.

If you are integrating with Sungard's SIS to take advantage of LIS 2.0 integration, you have to map certain User Object fields using the scripts below.

Learn Object Name	Custom Mapping Script
Username	<code>data.person.extensions.get('LogonId').value</code>
Password Encryption Type	<code>data.person.extensions.get('Password Encryption Type').value</code>
Password	<code>data.person.extensions.get('Password').value</code>

Other SIS systems might require different customization. Contact Blackboard Services for more information.

ActiveMQ

ActiveMQ is a Java Messaging Service (JMS) implementation that Blackboard is using to provide a distributed, fault-tolerant mechanism for sending messages to be processed in the background of the application. ActiveMQ was first introduced in Blackboard Learn Service Pack 7. Detailed configuration instructions are available in help.blackboard.com under [Configuring ActiveMQ Messaging](#).

ActiveMQ is installed on all application servers in a given Blackboard Learn configuration so they can communicate with each other. The default communication port is 61616, and must be open on all servers. If this port is not open, the servers will not be able to connect to the ActiveMQ broker and will cause some functions to work incorrectly.

The communication port for ActiveMQ can be changed by editing `bbconfig.messagequeue.transport.port` in the `bb-config.properties` file.

In addition, each application server needs to be able to resolve the hostname configured by all the other appservers to communicate. The host name is the one configured in `bbconfig.appserver.fullhostname` in the `bb-config.properties` file.

Manage Tasks with New `bbconfig.server.backend.processor` Setting

In the past, the `bb-tasks.xml` and `bb-tasks.xml.bb` needed to be edited by hand on all load-balanced servers except for one so that some background tasks were prevented from running on multiple servers. In Blackboard Learn SP8 a new line in the `bb-config.properties` file: `bbconfig.server.backend.processor` allows you to set which appservers will run all background tasks and which will run only those that need to run on every appserver.

The default value of `bbconfig.server.backend.processor` is set to `=true` when you do a full installation of Learn and `=false` on those where you do an appserver only install.

You must run a `PushConfigUpdtes` after changing any of the settings.

Emergency One-time Login URL

Administrators can use an Emergency One-time Login URL tool to create a one-time session limited login for a user from the comment line.

Basic LTI Enhancements

Three enhancements have been made to the Basic LTI implementation.

- Administrators have the option to add one or more placements for a Basic LTI tool provider, with the option to place in the Student Tools area or in the Interactive Tools menu in the content folder action bar.
- Administrators can add tool specific parameters to a Basic LTI tool configuration as specified by the Tool Provider.
- Administrator can view how many instances and who is using installed Basic LTI tools, enabling proactive configuration changes if necessary.

Orphaned Content

Content is considered orphaned when the user that owns the content no longer has a valid system account or if a course or organization is removed from the system but content related to that course or organization still appears in the Content Collection. Orphaned content does not include content owned by disabled or inactive users.

When a course is deleted, administrators are informed that the course content is marked as orphaned content. Any course folder where the course has been deleted is marked as orphaned content, even though it is possible another course maintains active links to the files in that folder. Use the 360° View option to see if the course folder has files linked to another course.

A visual identifier has been added to a column in this report to indicate the existence of course references to a given orphaned file/folder. This helps the administrator differentiate between obsolete content that can safely be removed from content that needs to be moved to a permanent location to ensure the integrity of existing courses.

Administrators can sort folders in the Orphaned Content report based on whether or not they have linked content (content that is linked in another course). This sorting by reference status facilitates bulk delete or move operations as appropriate. Administrators can click Recheck Content to run the system task that checks for newly orphaned content and update references of existing orphaned content in the report.

Blackboard Learn Release 9.1, Service Pack 10 (SP10)

This addendum is designed to supplement Understanding the Change from Blackboard Academic Suite 8.0 to Blackboard Learn 9.1 in order to provide information on the features and functions of Blackboard Learn™, Release 9.1, Service Pack 10 (SP10).

Known and resolved issues now populate a dynamically-generated list on each Release Article and each Service Pack article. They will update in real time as "Target Fix Releases" (the Service Pack where the issue will be fixed) and "Affects Versions" (what Service Packs have the issue occurring). For more information, visit [Behind the Blackboard](#).

Blackboard Learn 9.1 Service Pack 10 (SP10) includes enhancements and innovations that are grouped in the following categories:

- [System Administration](#)
- [Course Delivery](#)
- [Content Management](#)
- [Partner Integration](#)

System Administration

Cloud Settings

Cloud settings control the connection of an individual Blackboard Learn instance to Blackboard cloud services. Cloud settings are available on the System Administration panel under Cloud Management. Settings include:

- **Cloud Connector** – Creates the connection between Blackboard Learn and centrally located cloud services.
- **Cloud Profiles and Tools** – When the Cloud Profile and Tools option is enabled, users have access to create basic profiles and search for users by profile information. The cloud connector must be turned on first.
- **Cloud Settings** – Controls how cloud features display in Blackboard Learn and in third party networks like Twitter and Facebook. Cloud settings only appear if cloud services are enabled.
- **Reported Items** – Displays a queue of profiles that have been reported by users as inappropriate. Administrators can take action to remove items or block users based on school policies and procedures.

New Content Editor

The newly designed content editor vastly improves the user experience for adding text and other forms of digital content to Blackboard Learn. The new content editor is based on the industry standard TinyMCE WYSIWYG editor. The new content editor is delivered as a building block extension for optimal maintenance and integration.

- Collapsed and expanded views help users control screen space.
- A new math equation editor is included mathML (WIRIS).
- The content editor is always on for users so they no longer have to explicitly opt in or opt out.
- Spell check and the math editor options are controlled separately at the administrator level. They can be set at the system, course and organization levels.
- Administrators can control the spell check dictionaries from the Tools page. There are three dictionaries included in Learn. Additional open source dictionaries can be downloaded from the internet and installed.
- Administrators can control the math editor image service settings from the Tools page.
- The create reusable object option has been removed from the content editor but users can still create reusable objects from course files or the Content Collection.
- Administrators can extend the existing font family in the content editor to include non-system fonts such as Hellenistic Greek. Two resource bundles, `font.override`, and `font.addition`, allow you to override the set of default fonts or include additional fonts in the default set.
- Additional editing capabilities have been added including:
 - For text:
 - Correct copy and paste from Microsoft Word
 - Align Full
 - Find/Replace
 - Blockquote

- CSS editing
- Insert non-breaking spaces
- Symbols
- Emoticons
- For tables:
 - Setting row and cell properties
 - Insert and delete rows and cells
 - Splitting and merging cells
- For media
 - Consolidation of media selections under a single toolbar
 - Automatic HTML validation

File Picker

The file picker is the window that opens when users click Browse Content Collection or Browse Course. The file picker is available everywhere users attach files.

The file picker can

- Display a file or folder's name, last modification date, versions (files only) and size.
- Sort on each column being displayed.
- Change the number of items being displayed, editing the table's paging.
- Search across all folders and files with a single search input.
- Toggle between a list view and a thumbnail view. The interface for thumbnail view does not change.
- Go to the current folder listing's parent folder in one click.
- Quickly switch between the top-level content areas (My Content, Courses, Organizations, Institution, and Library), Bookmarks and the Learning Objects Catalog.
- Navigate the folder hierarchy using breadcrumbs.
- Switch to a more advanced search.
- Upload a file.

Learning Tools and Interoperability (LTI 1.1)

Note: The IMS has merged the Basic LTI and the LTI specifications with the release of LTI 1.1. Use of the term "Basic LTI" refers to Basic LTI 1.0.

Blackboard is certified to support LTI 1.1. This includes support for outcomes (grading of LTI based assignments) and support of additional launch parameters. Blackboard also supports custom parameters that may include Learn template variables that are resolved to Learn data (@X@ variable interpolation).

LTI 1.0 support in 9.1 SP10 has not changed.

LTI 1.0 is supported on 9.1 SP4 and above.

LTI 1.1 is supported on 9.1 SP10 and above.

Security

Blackboard is committed to improving security features and resolving security vulnerabilities quickly and carefully. Such security vulnerability resolutions may lead to the release of a Security Advisory as well as any needed product update for our customers based on the context, severity and timing of confirmed vulnerabilities. Below we have outlined the security enhancements and security vulnerabilities resolved in this release.

For more information on each of the features and improvements, please see the System Administrator documentation.

Input Validation Filter

The Input Validation Filter is the new first line of defense to confirm data coming into Blackboard Learn is safe. It verifies that user requests coming in to the system are safe by sanitizing the data through a default ruleset. Administrators can create a custom ruleset to override a rule in the default ruleset and to decide which building blocks to apply the filter.

The Input Validation Filter is fast, providing cross-site scripting fixes much faster than the traditional patching process. Traditional patches can have various dependency issues or may need to be rolled back. Providing fixes through the Input Validation Filter is a much cleaner and faster way of delivering patches, as they are provided directly through the Software Updates Center.

The Input Validation Filter is installed and enabled by default for Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 Service Pack 10 and later. Access the Input Validation Filter feature on the Administrator Panel.

Alternate File Domain Settings for Serving Content

This security control forces files uploaded by users to open from another web domain. It is a defense-in-depth compensating control against potentially malicious files. It helps protect from Cross-site Scripting attacks performed through malicious files by leveraging the internet browser's existing security control, the "same-origin policy."

For example, your institution's main Blackboard site is "https://blackboard.myinstitution.com" and content is served from "https://blackboard-content.myinstitution.com". By using an alternate domain, the user's cookies and session information is further protected from potentially malicious scripts in uploaded HTML files.

This security control is not enabled by default since it requires administrators to configure an alternate domain and its corresponding SSL certificate. Blackboard strongly recommends all customers enable this setting.

Cookie Disclosure Building Block

Blackboard is committed to ensuring that the collection, protection, use and storage of private information follows all legal and industry best practices by proactively supporting European Union regulations that help ensure privacy and security on the web. Blackboard is providing all Blackboard Learn clients with the Blackboard Security Management Cookie Disclosure building block. This building block allows schools to comply with the European Union's e-Privacy Directive. The building block can be downloaded and installed easily into Blackboard Learn instances.

The Blackboard Security Management Cookie Disclosure building block is intended to support the European Union Privacy Data Directive and laws implemented in the United Kingdom and other member states related to this directive. Specifically, this building block implements features that require users to provide consent prior to data collection and provides information about the nature and extent of data collection within Blackboard software and services to end users.

Related Security Advisories

Many of the security fixes related to the following security advisory are available in this release.

- Authorization Vulnerabilities in User Directory and Assignments of Blackboard Learn Could Allow Information Exposure
- Cross-site Scripting Vulnerabilities Course Delivery and Content Collection in Blackboard Learn Could Allow Elevation of Privilege
- Cross-site Scripting Vulnerability in Visual Text Box Editor of Blackboard Learn Could Allow Elevation of Privilege
- Cross-site Scripting Vulnerability in Spell Checker Could Allow Elevation of Privilege
- Cross-site Scripting Vulnerabilities in Blackboard Learn Could Allow Phishing
- Invalid Session Management in Legacy Content Upgraded to 9.1 Could Allow Session Hijacking

Course Delivery

Assessment Item Analysis

Item analysis provides statistics on overall test performance and on individual test questions. This data helps you recognize questions that might not adequately discriminate between students who understand the material and those who do not. You can use this information to improve questions for future tests or to adjust credit on current attempts. Ineffective or misleading question are identified easily, corrected in the Test Canvas, and are re-graded automatically.

Assessment Fill-in-the-Blank Question Enhancement

Fill in the Blank and Fill in Multiple Blanks questions now offer **contains** and **pattern match** (using regular expressions) as grading options for answers. Instructors no longer have to rely only on exact match for grading and manually enter every possible correct answer. Instructors can also make the answers case sensitive.

Delete Course Files with Course Delete

Users are now allowed to delete all course files when they delete their courses. This option eliminates orphaned content for courses. Without orphaned content in the course's home folder, reusing courseIDs is more efficient since you don't first have to use the orphaned content report to delete the course's home folder.

360° View Report Enhancement

A new column indicating if a file or subfolder is linked to course content, and if a subfolder contains files that are linked to course content has been added to the 360° View Report.

Enterprise Surveys and Course Evaluations

Enterprise surveys and course evaluations are integrated in Blackboard Learn making it easy to send surveys to courses, departments, institutions or the public. This does not replace the course surveys tool available to teachers inside their course to poll their students. Rather this tool is made available to survey administrator and survey manager accounts to create, send, and analyze surveys on an institutional level.

Survey reports can display aggregate results, analyzing data across courses and business units. Survey reports can display longitudinal results, analyzing data across time periods such as terms or years.

Global Navigation

Global navigating refers to the set of links that appears at the very top of Blackboard Learn. This set of links has been streamlined and becomes the entry point to My Blackboard and social learning tools. Access points to critical academic information is organized in one place to provide a consistent quick and easy way to find information.

When users first log in to SP10, they see an overlay that highlights the new features. After the first login, when users click on the global navigation link, a drop-down menu appears. The items that populate the menu are dependent on whether the cloud is turned on or off and if community engagement capabilities are licensed.

New components of global navigation include:

- The user menu – Provides access to settings that previously were accessed through My Places. My Places has been eliminated. Home and Help links reside here. Clients who license community engagement capabilities will find global links here as well.
- My Blackboard – Provides icons and links to various areas of Blackboard. The icons signal the presence of new information, such as new messages and new posts.

My Blackboard

My Blackboard aggregates information from across the Blackboard Learn system for users. Access My Blackboard using Global Navigation at the top of the screen.

My Blackboard has a navigation panel that quickly connects to different tools in the system. The tools you have access to depend on whether the cloud is turned on and if your school licenses community engagement capabilities. These features are available in My Blackboard:

- **My Blackboard Profile** – Users have access to view and edit their profiles as well as to post to their profile wall.
- **Profile Cards** – Information in profiles is shared when users post to blogs, journals, wikis, and the discussion board. Profile cards are shared in the roster tool and people tool.
- **My Blackboard Posts** – Aggregates posts and comments from blogs, journals, wikis, and discussion boards in courses.
- **My Blackboard Updates** – Aggregates all notifications that users have elected to receive.
- **My Blackboard Grades** – Displays recent grades for all courses users are enrolled in.
- **My Blackboard People** – Provides access to a person's academic network.

Feature	Course Delivery only Cloud off	Any license Cloud on
Login Overlay	Available	Enhanced. Includes prompting to create profile from the overlay. Options to link Facebook and Twitter accounts.
Global Navigation	Available	Enhanced. Includes Profile and People in the menu.
My Blackboard	Available	Enhanced. Includes Profile and People in the menu.
My Blackboard Profile	N/A	Available. Profile shows avatar, name, what I'm studying, about me, and primary email address.
Profile Cards	N/A	Available. Profile Cards limited to showing avatar, name, What I'm studying, About Me, and report.
My Blackboard Posts	Available	Enhanced. Includes avatar and profile cards in posts.
My Blackboard Grades	Available	Available

Feature	Course Delivery only Cloud off	Any license Cloud on
My Blackboard People	N/A	Available. Basic profiles of my academic network and search within the institution.
My Blackboard Updates	Available	Available

Content Management

Set Default Course Files Properties for Course Copy, Export, and Archive

Administrators can now control the default setting for copying course files or linking to course files during a course copy, export, or archive. This setting only affects courses created after upgrading to SP10.

Copy Course File Attachments

To cut down the number of file attachments that are duplicated during a course copy, a new option has been added to the course copy function for course files. Previously the entire course files directory was included in the package when users elected to include copies of course files. With this new option, users can decide to take the entire folder of files or only those files that are actually linked to course content.

File attachment selections are:

- **Copy links to course files** – no copies of linked files are included in the copy. The copied course will have the same set of links and those links will point back to the original location of the link defined in the origin course
- **Copy links and copies of the content** – This will only make copies of linked files. Files within the course's home folder that are not linked to any content within the course are not included in the copy.
- **Copy links and copies of the content (include entire Course home folder)** – This will make copies of all files in the course's home folder whether those files are linked to course content or not.

New User Warnings for Deleting or Moving Linked Folders or Files

Two new warnings help users avoid inadvertently creating broken links to files in their courses.

A warning occurs when a user deletes a folder that is directly linked to course content or that contains files that are linked to course content.

A warning occurs when a user moves a file linked to a course content, a folder that is directly linked to course content or that contains files that are linked to course content, to the recycling bin. This helps prevent broken links because most users are unaware that the recycling bin may be set to automatically purge.

Partner Integration

ConnectTxt

This building block is bundled in for SP10. When installed and configured, teachers can engage students using two-way text messaging. Students can opt-in to receive text alerts from their courses. Teachers can send text messages to students enrolled in their courses and receive their replies.

NBC Learn

The NBC Learn building block will no longer be bundled with Blackboard Learn SP 10. If you have this build block installed on your system, it will continue to function normally. If you would like to install it, visit the [Blackboard extensions catalog](#).