



# Client Support Services Guide

## Blackboard Learn (Managed Hosting, Self-Hosted & SaaS)

## Worldwide Headquarters

1111 19th Street NW  
Ninth Floor  
Washington, DC 20036  
www.blackboard.com

- +1 800 424 9299 toll free US & Canada
- +1 202 463 4860 telephone
- +1 202 463 4863 facsimile

## International Headquarters

Paleisstraat 1  
1012 RB Amsterdam  
The Netherlands  
www.blackboard.com

- +31 (0) 20 788 2450 (NL) telephone
- +31 (0) 20 788 2451 (NL) facsimile

Copyright © 1997-2017. 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™ 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.

ALL SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COMPANY ARE SUBJECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE APPLICABLE SOFTWARE LICENSE AGREEMENT OR SUPPORT SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN COMPANY AND THE APPLICABLE LICENSEE. BLACKBOARD RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MODIFY THIS DOCUMENT, FROM TIME TO TIME, EFFECTIVE FIVE (5) DAYS AFTER SUCH MODIFIED DOCUMENT IS POSTED AT THE RELEVANT LINK, SUCH POSTING TO CONSTITUTE EFFECTIVE NOTICE OF CHANGES

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Supported Products</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Release Terminology</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Support Categories</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Support Classifications</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Full Support</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>No Longer Supported</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Enterprise Support for System Administrators</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Enterprise Support Communication Methods</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Enterprise Support Services Designated Personnel</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Support Services Severity Levels &amp; Target Response Times</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Severity Level 1 .....	<b>8</b>
Severity Level 2 .....	<b>9</b>
Severity Level 3 .....	<b>9</b>
Severity Level 4 .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Reporting an issue</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Case Resolution</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Client Escalation</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Providing Blackboard Support Access to Your Server</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Using the Blackboard Learn Database Schema</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Support for Database Schema .....	<b>11</b>
Unauthorized Database Changes .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Exclusions to Enterprise Support Policies</b> .....	<b>12</b>

## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide information on the client services Blackboard Inc. provides as well as policies and procedures for administering client support. Included are definitions of the life cycle of supported products and support classifications. Options for the types of support available to clients are defined as well as the terms under which support may be provided.

## Supported Products

Blackboard Inc., together with its subsidiaries (the “Company”), currently makes Support Services available for certain of its products. Support Services are based on the support category to which each version of the product has been assigned by the Company. Support Services are subject to the terms of the applicable software license agreement between the Company and the applicable licensee (the “Agreement”). The Company products that are currently covered (individually, the “Product”; collectively, the “Products”) are as follows:

- **Blackboard Advise™**
- **Blackboard Learn™**
- **SaaS Deployment for Blackboard Learn™**
  - *Learning Core SaaS (available to North America Higher Education customers)*
  - *Learning Essentials SaaS (available to North America Higher Education customers)*
  - *Innovative Classroom SaaS (available to K-12 customers)*
  - *Common Core SaaS (available to K-12 customers)*
- **Blackboard Learn for Course Delivery™**
- **Blackboard Learn for Community Engagement™**
- **Blackboard Learn for Academic Collaboration™**
- **Blackboard Learn for Outcomes Assessment™**
- **Blackboard K-12 SchoolCentral™**
- **Blackboard K-12 EducatorCentral™**
- **Bb Planner™**
- **Blackboard ProSites™**
- **Blackboard Open Content™**

# Release Terminology

Blackboard refers to releases using the following terminology for all products except SaaS Deployments of Blackboard Learn.

## Release Terms and Descriptions

### New Feature / Major Release

- Previously Used Term • New Feature Service Pack (even numbered)  
Description • Major Releases consist of new functionality.

---

### Service Pack

- Previously Used Term • Maintenance Service Pack (odd numbered)  
Description • These releases are reserved for maintenance.  
• Blackboard will release Service Packs for Major Releases as needed.  
• Will include updates that were previously released in Cumulative Updates/Hotfixes.  
• May repair/refine reported functional issues of existing features.

---

### Cumulative Update

- Previously Used Term • Cumulative Patch  
Description • If a change needs to be published to multiple clients outside of a Major Release or Service Pack then a Cumulative Update is required.  
• Cumulative Updates are based on the latest branch of code (e.g. if a Service Pack was released prior to the Cumulative Update, a client's system must first be running the Service Pack before applying the Cumulative Update.).  
• Cumulative Updates will contain core code updates & Building Block updates as needed.

---

### Hotfix

- Previously Used Term • "One-off Patch" or Building Block Update  
Description • Hotfixes are requested by a client for a specific issue.  
• Hotfixes are targeted changes supplied to a single customer for an isolated problem or to use as a diagnostic utility.  
• When possible Hotfixes are rolled into Cumulative Updates.  
• Hotfix is subject to approval criteria.
-

## Support Categories

All products are classified into a support category that defines the level of support services that is provided to clients. Each product has a current designated category. Support Categories are subject to change as determined by the Company and the product roadmap.

- **Full Support** (formerly Category A): Full Support includes product versions for which Blackboard offers a wide range of support options. Products within Full Support receive as necessary Service Packs, Cumulative Updates and Hotfixes. SaaS Deployments for Blackboard Learn receive frequent updates and are covered under the Full Support category.
- **Operational Support** (formerly Category B): Operational Support includes those product versions for which Blackboard offers a modified support. This category does *not* include an active maintenance schedule such as Service Packs or Cumulative Updates. All issues related to products in the Operational Support category, for which Blackboard does not have an available fix or workaround will be examined on a case-by-case basis, and may require the client to upgrade to a version with Full Support for resolution, or a separately priced Professional Services engagement.
- **No Longer Supported** (formerly Category C): No Longer Supported products are not maintained by Blackboard. Clients are strongly encouraged to upgrade. Client Support will still answer informational questions regarding product use.

## Support Classifications

This table provided the current support category for the Company's Products as well as a roadmap of anticipated dates for reclassification. *This roadmap is subject to change.*

### Full Support

Full Support	General Availability	Operational Support <sup>1</sup>	No Longer Supported <sup>2</sup>
<b>SaaS Deployment for Blackboard Learn</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Learning Core SaaS</i></li> <li>• <i>Learning Essentials SaaS</i></li> <li>• <i>Innovative Classroom SaaS</i></li> <li>• <i>Common Core SaaS</i></li> </ul>	• September 2014	• Not Applicable	• Not Applicable
<b>Blackboard Learn 9.1 Q4 2018 Release</b>	• November 2018	• June 2020	• December 2020
<b>Blackboard Learn 9.1 Q2 2018 Release</b>	• April 2018	• January 2020	• June 2020
<b>Blackboard Learn 9.1 Q4 2017 Release</b>	• November 2017	• June 2019	• December 2019
<b>Blackboard Learn 9.1 Q2 2017 Release</b>	• April 2017	• January 2019	• June 2019
<b>Blackboard Learn 9.1 Q4 2016 Release</b>	• November 2016	• June 2018	• December 2018

<sup>1</sup> The anticipated date of reclassification to Operational Support.

<sup>2</sup> The anticipated date of reclassification to No Longer Supported.

## No Longer Supported

No Longer Supported	General Availability	End of Life
Blackboard Learn 9.1 Q2 2016 Release	• April 2016	• June 2018
Blackboard Learn 9.1 Q4 2015 Release	• November 2015	• December 2017
Blackboard Learn 9.1 October 2014 Release	• November 2014	• June 2017
Blackboard Learn, Release 9.1 Service Pack 13	• June 2013	• December 2014
Blackboard Learn, Release 9.1 Service Pack 14	• October 2013	• June 2015
Blackboard Learn, Release 9.1 April 2014 Release	• January 2016	• June 2016

No Longer Supported	Support End Date <sup>3</sup>
Blackboard Learn Release 9.1 SP12 and previous releases	• August 2014
Blackboard Learning System--Vista Enterprise License Vista 8.0	• January 2013
Blackboard Learning System--CE Enterprise License <sup>^</sup>	• January 2013
Blackboard Learning System--CE Enterprise Ltd. License <sup>^</sup>	
Blackboard Learning System--CE Basic License <sup>^</sup>	
Blackboard Learn, Release 9.0, 8.0, 7.0, 6.0 • All variants, all versions	• October 2012
Blackboard Learning System--Vista Enterprise License • All versions (including 3.0, 4.0, 8.0)	• October 2011
Blackboard Content System, Release 2.3	• October 2010
Blackboard Portfolio (for CE/Vista) for Vista 8.0 • All versions	• October 2010
Blackboard Outcomes System, Version 1.0	• June 2009
Blackboard Content System, version 2.0, 1.0	• October 2008
All previous Product versions	
Blackboard Learning System ML, all versions	

<sup>3</sup> Support end date for the most recent version.

<sup>^</sup> Includes any WebCT Modules initially licensed prior to July 8, 2006.



# Enterprise Support for System Administrators

Enterprise Support provides broader and deeper support coverage for institutions running in mission-critical and complex Enterprise environments. Enterprise Support is provided on a 24/7/365 basis, which provides customers with round-the-clock support services.

Enterprise Support also provides technical support for complex implementations of the Company's products and is highly recommended for installations which involve any of the following elements:

- Multiple servers
- Load balanced and/or clustered environments
- Blackboard Building Blocks®
- Authentication integration
- SIS integration
- Blackboard advanced reporting

*Enterprise Support is included with the following Products:*

- Blackboard Learn™
- Blackboard Learn for Course Delivery™
- Blackboard Learn for Community Engagement™
- Blackboard Learn for Academic Collaboration™
- Blackboard Learn for Outcomes Assessment™
- Blackboard K-12 SchoolCentral™
- Blackboard K-12 EducatorCentral™
- Blackboard ProSites™
- Blackboard Open Content™

## Enterprise Support Communication Methods

- **Telephone support** Licensee is eligible to receive support in English from the Company. The Company may make support available in other languages from time to time, subject to the language capabilities of its technical staff. Licensees may request to be assigned to a Technical Support Manager who speaks their language. Where possible, the Company will attempt to provide this service. Licensees accept that this may cause some delays while an available resource in their language is located, and thus may elect to have a faster response in English.

Telephone-based support is available twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven days (7) a week, three hundred and sixty-five (365) days a year.

- **Web-based Self Service** – Licensee is eligible submit and add notes to cases as well as access to documentation, release notes and knowledge resources.
- **Case Communications by Email** – After a case has been created either by telephone or web-based self-service, ongoing communication may take place by email, provided the licensee does so by replying to emails coming from [support@blackboard.com](mailto:support@blackboard.com) and does not alter the subject line.



## Enterprise Support Services Designated Personnel

Licensee may designate up to two (2) of its personnel for purposes of receiving Support, and may designate substitute personnel by providing written notice to the Company (provided that not more than two (2) persons may be designated as support contacts at any given time). These designated personnel should be staff members who have access to the Blackboard administrator interface and has or can easily obtain SSH or VNC/Terminal Services access to the server on which the Product is installed.

The Company requires a Primary System Administrator for each client who acts as the primary system administrative point of contact for Blackboard within the client's institution. Blackboard Support will contact this individual if there are questions related to support but outside the scope of a particular case such as license key renewals or replacements. This individual is typically active in the support portal (submits support cases as needed), is very familiar with the institution's implementation and usage of their Blackboard product, and is able to answer questions and make decisions pertaining to how the product is supported.

All system administrators for an institution, including the primary administrator, will be able to submit cases, access knowledge and documentation on the Behind the Blackboard, and edit system and personal contact information. System administrators will have access to hotfixes, updates, and releases of the supported Product when they become generally available to licensees.

Reasonable efforts to respond to all support requests and to remedy any documented and reproducible errors and defects in the Product that are submitted using an approved means within the following targeted response and resolution times.

## Support Services Severity Levels & Target Response Times

All support requests are important. However, some requests take precedence over others. Support has created four categories ("Severity Levels") for support requests. Requests for support are handled based of severity level assigned to each issue.

Severity Levels also determine initial response time targets. The most severe cases have the swiftest targeted response times. Severity Level definitions and their response times are described in the sections below.

**Note:** Severity Level Agreement response times may vary. Please refer to the Client contract when in doubt.

The time a request is logged is the time the call or web-based self service request is recorded by the Company.

Web-based self-service and telephone are the only approved means for initial support request submission under Company Support. The Support staff is not responsible for responding to requests made by third parties or directly to Company Support staff members, or by any means other than those described above. Blackboard classifies Support Incidents as follows:

### Severity Level 1

Your Blackboard Production System is down and not functioning, the system is disabled or non-responsive.

Some examples of Severity Level 1 Application errors are as follows:

- No users are able to access the service
- Service is not able to communicate with external systems.

When a Severity Level 1 issue is reported, the Company will assign resources to remedy the error; if access to the Product is required, we ask that you provide access to your system and other software for the duration of the error correction procedures.

Response time for Severity Level 1 is within one (1) hour.

**Note:** Severity Level 1 only applies for Production Environments.

## Severity Level 2

Your Blackboard Product is functioning but major components are unavailable or unusable. The Application is running but you may be unable to use major portions of the Software.

Some examples of Severity Level 2 Software errors are as follows:

- The service is unavailable to a subset of users or it is intermittently unavailable.
- A major functional component is unavailable.

When a Severity Level 2 issue is reported, the Company will assign resources to remedy the error; if access to the Product is required, we ask that you provide access to your system and other software for the duration of the error correction procedures.

Response time for Severity Level 2 is within four (4) hours.

## Severity Level 3

Your Blackboard Product is operating close to normal; however minor components are functioning abnormally.

Response time for Severity Level 3 is within one (1) Business Day.

## Severity Level 4

Severity Level 4 implies that the Software is operating normally but you may be in need of instructional assistance.

Response time for Severity Level 4 is within one (1) Business Day.

*Note: Severity Level 1, 2, and 3 will take priority over Severity Level 4 cases.*

## Reporting an issue

When submitting a case, Client should include steps to recreate the problem in a similar environment to assist Blackboard Support with case investigation. Client should follow these guidelines when submitting the Case:

- The Case form must be completely filled out. Blackboard may be unable to act upon any incident until all information reasonably requested has been received by Blackboard. All information so requested is critical in evaluating the issue. If the Case form does not have the required information requested, Blackboard will need to request the additional information, thereby delaying the process. If the additional information is not provided within seven (7) days, the request will be considered withdrawn and the Case closed. Client may create a new case or reopen the request at a later date once Client is able to submit the requested information.
- Client must designate on the Case form the incident classification that is appropriate for Client's problem. Priority will be given to Level 1 Level 2 incident designations.
- Client must maintain necessary account(s) for Blackboard support to access the site.
- Client must provide via the Case form :
  - A full description of the problem,
  - Sample of output showing the problem,
  - Steps to reproduce the problem,
  - Expected results, and,
  - A copy of the input transaction that caused the problem.

## Case Resolution

After the initial response to your support request, Support will respond to subsequent requests within one (1) business day of:

- Case creation
- Email replies to [support@blackboard.com](mailto:support@blackboard.com) emails concerning your case.
- Notes added to cases using web-based self-service.

*Support's targeted resolution times are:*

- One (1) subsequent business day for issues with a solution that has been previously implemented and validated by the Company, provided that Company has previously resolved the solution within one (1) business day of its identification by the Company as a known issue ("Routine Issues").
- A commercially reasonable effort until resolution is reached for all non Routine Issues ("Complex Issues").
- Targeted resolution times are applicable for implementations operating in certified configurations.

## Client Escalation

Please refer to the Escalation Procedures link on the Behind the Blackboard Home page for a downloadable copy of the Blackboard Escalation Procedures

## Providing Blackboard Support Access to Your Server

To effectively resolve issues submitted, the Enterprise Support staff may require any of the following information:

- Login information for Student or Designer/Faculty members experiencing problems
- Login information for Blackboard Administrator (for non-hosted environments)
- SSH or VNC/Terminal Services access to the Blackboard server (for non-hosted environments)

The targeted response/resolution times described herein are subject to the Company's ability to obtain, when needed, server access by the means identified by the Company herein. The Company's support staff must approve any request by a licensee for the use of alternative means of server access in advance. The Company shall use reasonable efforts to accommodate any reasonable request for the use of an alternative means of server access; however, in the case of such an accommodation, the service level agreement targets for initial response, status updates and resolution as set forth herein shall not apply with respect to the specific support request for which an alternative means of server access is used. Such is the case with VPN access.

Lack of server access or lack of server access in a manner supported by the Company as identified herein may cause delays in resolving support requests and may render the Company unable to resolve a support request. In such cases, licensees may wish to consider an on-site, separately priced professional services engagement.

The Company's commitment to providing timely, quality technical support is based upon having sufficient server access to resolve a support request.

As per the following Exclusions section, Enterprise Support shall not include support for any Product running in an unsupported configuration. In the event a licensee is running a Product in an unsupported configuration and reports a problem, the Company may, at its sole discretion, attempt to replicate the issue in-house at the Company on systems running in a Company-supported configuration. If the Company's support staff is able to replicate the problem on a supported configuration, the Company may elect to handle the support request in accordance with its standard support procedures. If the Company's support staff is unable to replicate a problem on a supported configuration, the Company shall refer such licensee to the Company's Professional Services department for a separately priced professional services engagement and recommend that such licensee move to a Company-supported configuration.

## Using the Blackboard Learn Database Schema

With the release of Blackboard Learn, Release 9.1, Service Pack 1 (9.1.452.0), documentation is available that describes the data characteristics of the tables and columns in the Blackboard Learn 9.1 database, including: data types and sizes, null ability, index, sequence, key and constraint information. Additional commentary is also provided for key tables and columns.

By agreeing to the terms of your license, Customers can download this set of documentation for the purposes of building read-only queries and designing custom reports. The schema can also be used to perform analysis and troubleshooting.

*Note: Customers are not permitted to make changes to the schemas presented.*

Customers are permitted to access the schema by employing the user interfaces, APIs, and tools such as Building Block schema.xml, and Building Block persistence APIs. In specific circumstances, Support may provide scripts to resolve a situation. However, any other changes to the Blackboard schema may only be done with a Blackboard Consulting engagement. Please contact your Account Executive if you would like to work with our consulting team to make any changes to your Blackboard database.

## Support for Database Schema

Support can provide assistance with access to the database schema documentation as well as interpreting the tables that correspond to the different features or features sets of Blackboard Learn.

Specific support for writing queries or training on database concepts is not provided. However, the Bb developer community does offer informal assistance and insight. Visit <https://community.blackboard.com/community/developers/learn> to connect with your peers.

## Unauthorized Database Changes

The Company cannot support unauthorized database changes. Customers that make an unauthorized change will be informed that such a change has occurred. Customers may:

- Restore a backup of their system prior to the change.
- Engage Blackboard Consulting for assistance by contacting the Customer's Account Executive. Consulting typically has a 4-week scheduling lead time. If the Customer can wait for available database expertise, Consulting will work with the Customer to diagnose the issue and determine potential resolution and best course of action. A statement of work/consulting contract will be needed.

## Exclusions to Enterprise Support Policies

The Enterprise Support described in this document applies only when the Product is installed locally at the applicable licensee's site or hosted by the Company on behalf of such licensee.

Enterprise Support coverage does not include environmental-related support requests that involve the following areas:

- Server migration issues<sup>#</sup>.
- Improper usage of the Product (such as database files removed from the Product, customization of the Product, prohibited usage, and so on).
- Unsupported changes to the database such as directly writing to the database or using the database schema to alter or delete records.
- Assistance with understanding data relationships as presented in the database schema documentation in order to write or format queries.
- Improper installation and configuration of operating system components\*.
- Improper hardware configuration for size of deployment\*.
- Hardware (server) problems\*.
- Server operating system problems\*.
- Non-supported 3rd party tools used with Product (except those where a support partnership exists).
- Issues arising with Products hosted by a third party, unless agreed upon in writing in advance by the Company (where such permission has been granted, issues arising as a result of the third party which would not have occurred with a Company hosted instance of the Product are excluded).
- Issues arising on an unsupported configuration.
- Issues known by Company not to be related to the Product application itself.

<sup>#</sup> Separately priced professional consulting services are available – Contact a Company Account Representative to learn more.

# Blackboard®

## **Blackboard.com**

Copyright © 2017. Blackboard Inc. All rights reserved. Blackboard, the Blackboard logo, BbWorld, Blackboard Learn, Blackboard Transact, Blackboard Connect, Blackboard Mobile, Blackboard Collaborate, Blackboard Analytics, Blackboard Engage, Edline, the Edline logo, 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/or other countries. Blackboard products and services may be covered by one or more of the following U.S. Patents: 8,265,968, 7,493,396; 7,558,853; 6,816,878; 8,150,92