The following outlines the Q4 2017 Release. For more details, please login to Behind the Blackboard.

**ADDITIONAL REST SERVICES**

New REST services have been added, including the addition of course copy to include a service to request progress status, the ability to create and manage LTI placements, three-legged OAuth, and content file attachments. In addition, the gradebook APIs have been enhanced to include grading schemas and gradebook notations. For more information, visit the developer portal.

**LEARNING TOOLS INTEROPERABILITY (LTI) CONTENT ITEM MESSAGES**

The Content Item Message specification is now supported, allowing improved integration for tool providers also supporting this standard. When used, instructors and course designers can create links to specific resources without knowing and specifying resource IDs. Instead, they can launch into the tool provider’s user experience, select one or more resources to add to their course, and the individual links are created in the correct place in the Blackboard Learn course. Students clicking the links will be taken directly to the specific resource rather than to a generic tool page for the tool provider.

**LEARNING TOOLS INTEROPERABILITY (LTI) IMPROVEMENTS**

**LTI 2.0 tool registration**

Tool providers who use the LTI 2.0 specification can be registered using the proxy service standard.

**Improved launch experience**

LTI links now open in a lightbox within the course, rather than directing users to a new window or tab. This loads tools within the same window from where they are launched, creating a more consistent and contained workflow for students.

**Improved grading with rubrics**

When grading with rubrics, the grader can now save feedback and the content will remain saved when changing the rubric's view from in-line to full screen.
ADDITIONAL CHANGES

**Portfolio:** Administrators can share a portfolio on behalf of a user, allowing support personnel to assist students having portfolio access issues.

**Enterprise Surveys:** Reports always run as scheduled jobs rather than immediately to address issues with browsers timing out for large data sets.

**Virtual Drive:** When a new user is created recycling a previously-used username, the orphaned content associated with the prior user is deleted for greater security and privacy.
CHEMISTRY NOTATION SUPPORT

The math editor found in the Content Editor has been updated to a newer version of WIRIS. This version adds tools specific to chemistry including an embedded periodic table of elements.
COURSE AVAILABILITY STATUS AND UPDATE

Instructors and other privileged course members can see the availability state of the course and change the state from the main course view. All privileged users in a course see an open or closed padlock representing the availability state of the course to students. This is in the course edit management areas with tools such as Student Preview and the Edit Mode toggle.

CROCODOC TO NEW BOX VIEW UPDATE

Instructors grading assignments can view documents in-line and annotate the document to provide feedback for students. In prior versions, this used a licensed technology called Crocodoc that will be discontinued on January 15, 2018. This release allows institutions to switch to a replacement service from Box entitled New Box View that offers similar capabilities. Prior documents with annotations will be automatically migrated without requiring action from administrators. Administrators only need to enable the New Box View service.

It is recommended administrators initiate the migration between periods of heavy assessment such as between terms; the migration to and adoption of New Box View doesn't have to occur at time of upgrade.

More on the Crocodoc transition to New Box View

EMAIL TOOL RECIPIENT PERMISSIONS

Administrators can better define the extent to which users in courses can contact one another using the Email tool. Previously, instructors would choose which email recipient options were available in each course; for example, whether students could email each other. Administrators can now restrict the Email tool recipient options that will appear for use in courses.
MANAGE CONNECTED THIRD-PARTY APPLICATIONS USING THREE-LEGGED OAuth 2.0

Starting with this release, Blackboard Learn provides support for three-legged OAuth (3LO) 2.0 authorization. Developers can create applications using REST APIs that act on a user's behalf in a more secure way. When authorized using 3LO, applications can act on behalf of a user and therefore are restricted to the parts of Learn for which that user has permissions to access.

When users work in a third-party tool, the application may ask your permission to operate within Learn on your behalf. This process allows the application to submit assignments or tasks the user has completed to Blackboard Learn. Similar to syncing social media applications, the integration allows learning platforms to work together. Once a user allows access, they can manage the authorization from the Tools panel.

Previously, such applications could only work with Learn using generic credentials. Generic credentials had all permissions needed for the application, regardless of individual user's access levels. This method also didn't provide the ability to track individual user activities. Now, Learn supports either method: the use of generic credentials or user-specific credentials and permissions.
The Administrator Panel now includes the option to migrate messages in courses and organizations to the Learn database. Older course and organization message were stored via flat files on a shared storage volume. New courses and organizations always store messages in the database.

You can find the migration option in Administrator Panel > Tools and Utilities > Course Messages.

During migration, the system skips a course or organization if it doesn’t exist, is disabled, or already uses database storage. You can check your system logs to confirm message migration is complete.
SCORM ENGINE UPDATE

The integrated SCORM player has been updated to a newer version that improves playback of responsive content and better supports SCORM packages in right-to-left languages such as Arabic.

SMTP AUTHENTICATION AND ENCRYPTION FOR EMAIL

SMTP authentication is now supported to improve the security of outbound email. Mail server configuration is now handled in the Email configuration page of the Admin panel. Settings take effect upon submission. An entry in the registry is created the first time this configuration page is used.

COLLABORATE ULTRA BUILDING BLOCK UPDATE

Add Collaborate Ultra to your group tools.

Instructors can add Collaborate Ultra sessions to Groups pages in the Original Course View of Blackboard Learn. If instructors allow, students can share content and use the whiteboard, as well as create recordings. Institutions need a Collaborate license to use this in their courses.
GRADE CENTER/GRADEBOOK

Display Standardization

This change standardizes areas of Blackboard Learn where users access grades. Now, all gradebook columns (online and downloads) and My Grades support up to five decimal points, aren't rounded, and are consistent for all display types (score, percentage, letter grade).

More efficient Grade Center cleanup

Instructors can now more easily clean up their grade books by deleting multiple columns at once. Selected manual and calculated columns are removed completely. Selected columns associated with gradable items are cleared of attempt and grade data but remain in the Grade Center.

ADDITIONAL ARIA LANDMARKS IN THE ORIGINAL COURSE VIEW

We’ve incorporated ARIA landmarks in the course menu and the content area to better define the page structure and assist users with screen readers in navigating page elements.

For more information on how Aria Landmarks are used, please review the W3C page.

MORE RESPONSIVE BLOGS AND JOURNALS TOOLS

Blogs and Journals have been better optimized for use on mobile devices. Posts and comments composed with responsive content will render on smaller devices. Options for filtering posts or navigating groups or users will appear below currently viewed posts.
This release includes navigation improvements for the system and course menus in the Original experience. When users access Blackboard Learn through their mobile devices, the navigation has been moved to a hamburger menu for persistent access from screen to screen. Tabs and subtabs also appear in navigation choices. My Blackboard has been incorporated into the system menu for easier access. Within a course, the menu opens and closes more easily with fixed location action rather than tab.
NEW BLACKBOARD APP DOWNLOAD MODULE

A new module called Download Blackboard's Student App Today has been added to help students discover and download the Blackboard app. The module includes links to the Apple, Android, and Windows app download locations.

While the module is available by default for users to add to personalized tabs, it is not added to any tabs automatically. Administrators can use standard tab and module configuration to present the module on appropriate student tabs or to restrict the module entirely.

DISCUSSION BOARD "REPLIES TO ME"

Keeping up with large Discussion Board forums is easier by giving participants a count and filter to just look at new replies from others to posts made the participant.