UH Blackboard External Building Block Guidelines

These guidelines refer to Blackboard external building blocks, which are third party applications added to Blackboard to provide tools accessed from within UH Blackboard. Blackboard also provides internal built-in building blocks that are an intrinsic part of the Blackboard System and not covered by these guidelines.

UH or UHV Colleges or Departments may submit a request to add an external building block to UH Blackboard by completing the new Building Block Request Form at

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http://eitportal.uh.edu/blackboard/bldg-blk/

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This form gathers important information on the external building block, as well as who will pay for the building block, and how it will be supported. It is important to complete the form as thoroughly as possible to speed the evaluation process.

All building blocks will require a contract approved by the Office of Contracts Administration. If the building blocks will collect and/or store any UHS information, the Information Security Hosted Services Checklist must also be completed by UIT Security and submitted to OCA as a component of the contract review process. The checklist along with other contract process information and forms can be found on the OCA website: https://www.uh.edu/legal-affairs/contract-administration/pdf-documents/informationsecurityhostedservicescontractchecklistogc-s-2016-03_revised5.3.2018.pdf. In addition, a copy of the contract or agreement with the building block vendor should be provided to blackboard@uh.edu.

External building blocks will not be approved if they require a separate username/password to access these external building block tools.

Building block requests will be reviewed by UH Blackboard administrators, representatives of the Faculty and Departmental Instructional Support team, and UH IT Security. Some of the features that will be reviewed include functionality of the building block, security of data transfer and storage, and competing or comparable building blocks. If a request is not denied during this portion of the review, the building block will be installed on a test system to ensure that the building block will not disrupt normal system functions or cause existing tools to malfunction or break. After testing is completed, the request will either be denied, or the building block will be installed on the production system. The entire review process could take 60-90 days.

Approved external building blocks can be enabled campus-wide or for a college (i.e., isolated and available to only valid licensed users in UH Blackboard courses in that college). It is not possible to activate a building block for just one department, one instructor, or one course.

The requestor of the building block should inform blackboard@uh.edu within 30 days of when a building block is no longer needed, or the license has expired, so it can be removed from UH Blackboard.

The building block will be re-evaluated whenever a new version of Blackboard Learn or the building block is released. Discovery of security issues or complaints from students may also trigger a re-evaluation, and possible suspension from the Blackboard system