System Add-ons

The Next Generation Digital Learning Environment (EDUCAUSE) connects an array of technology platforms, services, and tools as components of an integrated system to enable innovative teaching and learning. To better facilitate this convergence we are increasingly linking Blackboard with other platforms to create a central hub for seamless access to course materials and assessment tools to help you succeed in your course work. You can think of these connections as Blackboard “add-ons” and they are also known as Building Blocks and LTI (learning tools interoperability).

- See what we have at UAlbany.
- Learn about the UAlbany process for evaluation and governance of Blackboard Add-ons.

Why Add-ons?

Add-on Integration with Blackboard generally delivers three capabilities:

1. **Single-Sign-On** - SSO is what enables Blackboard as a central hub. You can link your Blackboard account with your account with another system so it will remember you as your UAlbany identity, thus helping to both eliminate the need for multiple log ins and ensure identity verification, security, and privacy.

2. **Roster Synchronization** - Once a Blackboard course is paired with a corresponding resource in another system, students enrolled in the Blackboard course will have similar access levels in the corresponding course. For example, rostered students of a Blackboard course would be able to access a website associated with their textbook (provided they have licensed access).

3. **Grade Integration** - External platforms that include assessment tools often provide the ability to send grades to the Blackboard Grade Center (a direct result of SSO and roster sync.) For example, an iClicker course folder on your flash drive can upload session points directly to the Grade Center of its corresponding Blackboard course - a convenient time saver.

Add-ons vary widely in what they bring to Blackboard. Do you use Electronic Reserves? iClicker? Perhaps a publisher content and assessment system that's connected to your textbook? Each of these are examples of platforms, services, or tools that are external to Blackboard but that you can utilize with your Blackboard course in an integrated way.

Need more help? Contact the **ITS Service Desk**.