

# Blackboard Help

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## Feature Information for Administrators

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### Administrator Console

The Administrator Console is a feature area where ANGEL and Blackboard Learn share a common terminology, though the purpose and features behind the tools differ between the two products. In ANGEL, the Admin Console is a broad term to describe the menu where all Admin level tasks are maintained. In Learn, that menu is referred to as the System Admin Tab and one of the features available to users on that System Admin Tab is the Admin Console. Admin Console refers to a set of diagnostic and troubleshooting tools available through the user interface to begin to work through performance monitoring and issues.

[➞ More on the Admin Console](#)

### APIs and customization

Blackboard Learn and ANGEL each provide API tools that allow programmatic push of data into the LMS. Learn's API's are Java/SOAP-based and offers a full suite of content and course management API's including basic Create, Replace, Update, and Delete capabilities.

[➞ More on Event-Driven APIs in Learn](#)

[➞ More on API/Web Services](#)

### Batch utilities

Both ANGEL and Blackboard Learn have a number of utilities that allow data import or creation in batches. Comma-Separated (.csv) and Tab-Separated (.tsv) files are the standard accepted file types for both platforms, though Blackboard Learn will accept additional formats. The following batch utilities are present and accomplish the same use cases in both LMS applications:

- Batch User Account Creation/Deletion ([File Guidelines](#))
- Batch Course Creation ([Creating Courses Using Batch Files in Blackboard Learn](#))
- Batch Export/Import/Archive/Restore Courses ([How to Export, Archive, and Restore Courses in Batch](#))

## Blackboard Social Cloud

The Blackboard Cloud Service supports integrated features including Software Updates, Inline Assignment Grading, and Social Learning tools that provide your students and educators with an enhanced educational experience that meets the needs of today's active learner and improves student engagement.

The Blackboard Learn Profile enables users to have an online identity so they can discover each other and share their academic resume with classmates and potential employers.

Profiles are integrated with MyEdu extending a user's academic resume beyond the institution walls and to where employers are looking.

➞ [More on the Blackboard Cloud](#)

➞ [More on Social Learning Tools](#)

➞ [More on User Profiles](#)

➞ [More on Profile FAQs](#)

## Collaborate Building Block

The Blackboard Collaborate Building Block allows instructors to web conference and connect with one student or an entire class. Instructors and students can collaborate using audio, video, a whiteboard, screen sharing, and a variety of tools to facilitate interaction with a large group, such as polling.

The collaborate service is available for integration with Learn and Angel as well as a stand-alone platform, but Learn supports a more seamless integration with courses.

➞ [More on the Blackboard Collaborate Building Block](#)

## Language support

Both ANGEL and Learn offer additional Language Support. In comparison- Blackboard Learn offers a much greater variety of customization for multiple languages, however. ANGEL has a fully developed Spanish language pack which can be applied throughout an environment, while Blackboard Learn offers the same functionality for Spanish as well as a multitude of other languages. Each LMS can also be configured to read/display foreign language characters on a course-by-course basis.

➞ [More on Language Packs](#)

Mathematical formula characters and syntax are supported in both Angel and Learn via the MathML

standard. In Learn, the Math Image Editor Service also generates images from the MathML for increased performance in deployment.

➞ [More on the Math Image Editor](#)

## Learning Object Repository (LOR)

Both ANGEL and Learn provide LOR functionality. Learn<sup>1</sup>'s LOR functionality is powered by Blackboard Open Content, and while similar to the ANGEL LOR, Blackboard Open Content offers so much more. Blackboard Open Content is a cloud-based, cross-platform, global learning object repository. It is also an authoring environment, with familiar content creation tools. It enables sharing and discovery of learning objects within and across institutions with a rich metadata engine, and it also allows for copyright management using either custom copyrights or the Creative Commons system. Plus, all content is delivered through the LMS for a seamless experience for students. Because Blackboard Open Content is a cloud-based solution, it can be connected both to your Blackboard Learn co-production environment and your ANGEL environment as you transition from ANGEL to Learn. Blackboard Open Content provides another option to help you migrate content from ANGEL for use in Blackboard Learn.

➞ [More on Blackboard Open Content](#)

## Rights / roles / permissions

Determining what types of privileges are available to each user in the system is a very important facet of the customization of your environment. ANGEL and Blackboard Learn each has a default set of privileges that user levels are assigned- but those privileges are customizable to fit within the structure/constraints of your goals for the system. An unlimited number of unique are available in each LMS to ensure that it is possible to build out a list of roles that accurately maps out to your organization structure or desired constraints of student access.

While ANGEL uses a single structure of Rights/Roles Management, roles in Blackboard Learn add further granularity through [System Roles](#), [Institution Roles](#), and [Course Roles](#).

➞ [More on About User Roles and Privileges](#)

## SIS integration

Blackboard Learn offers a sophisticated SIS Integration tool out of the box that fills a familiar role in the LMS similar to what XEI offered within ANGEL.

The Blackboard Learn SIS Integration Framework supports the following integration types:

- LIS 2.0 Final: Learner Information Services, the IMS standard for event driven SIS integration

- Snapshot Flat File: Learn defined file-based data format
- Enterprise 1.1: Legacy IMS integration type
- Snapshot XML: Legacy Learn defined data format modeled after Enterprise 1.1

Those migrating from ANGEL XEI would be most familiar with the Flat File approach, as that was a common standard for the XEI integration, but the SIS Integration Framework is flexible and offers a few different options for how to best retrieve the data.

New with the [LIS 2.0 Final Integration](#) is the ability to transport Grade Center data (grading schemas, grade columns, and the actual grades for students), allowing an external system to read grade data without a Building Block or other customization. An LIS-conformant SIS can create, update, or read data in the grade-related objects. This means that grades can be retrieved from or updated in Blackboard Learn, as long as the request originates in the SIS. An important note is that the integration only expects to retrieve the Final Grade. This is not designed to retrieve all grades, of all types of columns.

➞ [More on Migrating from ANGEL XEI to Learn Snapshot Flat File](#) (available in English only)

## Site branding

One of the foundations to any end-user facing web application is the ability to create a look and feel which identifies your site as unique and specific to your institution. The ANGEL and Blackboard Learn LMS applications are no different in this regard and each offers a robust setup tool to customize the look and feel of your environment to best suit your goals and end-user appearance.

The multi-site customization/branding that can be done in ANGEL today may also be done in Blackboard Learn through use of [Domains](#), and Site Branding can be configured for different hostnames or specific user roles in the system. In Blackboard Learn, [Brands and Themes](#) is where all of your site branding customizations will generally be created and applied to users or hostname entries.

## SQL Query Manager

At this time, the SQL Query Manager is unique to the ANGEL LMS. System Administrators will still be able to create and develop custom query/reporting to the open Blackboard Learn database through SQL Server Management Studio (Windows install), MySQL (Oracle database), or similar database server utility.

- Open Database Schema Resources are available on Behind the Blackboard
- Search "Documentation" > "Schema", or "Open Database Schemas for all Learn 9.1 Service Packs"

For Learn - Managed Hosting Clients, we offer the Advanced System Reporting Tools to retrieve common reports/statistics from the Managed Hosting environment. If you are migrating to a Managed Hosting environment, we recommend that you log a support case to request that ASR (Advanced System

Reporting) be enabled for your environment.

We provide an online course/user group which contains additional information and session info specific to the ASR Tools as well, found on the [ASR User Group](#) page.

## System logging and diagnostics

Angel and Learn take quite different approaches to system logging.

Angel logs all application errors and warnings to a single ExceptionLog table in the database. Session history, content access history, API logs, content exchange logs and SIS integration logs are also stored in database tables.

For full web traffic history, IIS logs provide the only complete records. There are no native performance diagnostic tools in Angel.

Learn generally logs to text files in the blackboard/logs directory. The primary application error log is 'bb-services', but there are several other log files to monitor the JVM, SQL, ActiveMQ, notifications, email, authentication, etc. The log file names usually are indicative of the contents.

A GUI interface enables you to view SIS integration history and back-end system task status. A log rotation task automatically starts new files to keep log files to a manageable size.

➞ [More on Blackboard Logs](#) (available in English only)

Learn also provides a native application to monitor server performance in the GUI via the Admin Console building block.


➞ [More on Admin Console](#)

## Third party tools

Integrations with other educational tools are becoming more and more common. Both ANGEL and Learn offer ways to integrate other tools with your LMS, though Learn offers a more robust catalog of options. While ANGEL integrations are primarily done through custom provider installs and nuggets, Blackboard Learn interfaces with this content through Building Blocks. The Building Block Extensions catalog is a good place to get started in seeing what free and paid options are available for integration into Blackboard Learn.

➞ [More on Blackboard Extensions Catalog](#) (available in English only)

Both platforms also offer Learning Tools and Interoperability (LTI) compatibility, which can allow you to link and integrate other LTI compatible content.

 [More on LTI](#) (available in English only)

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