These guidelines refer to Blackboard external building blocks, LTI integrations, and RESTful API integrations, which are third party applications added to Blackboard to provide tools accessed from within UHCL’s Blackboard Learn system. Blackboard also provides internal built-in building blocks that are an intrinsic part of the Blackboard System and not covered by these guidelines.

UHCL faculty/staff may submit a request to add an external building block, LTI integration, or API integration to UHCL’s Blackboard production system by completing the new Building Block Request Form.

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

All building blocks and LTI/API integrations will require a contract approved by the Procurement and Payables unit’s Contract Administration staff. If the building blocks or integrations will collect and/or store any UHCL, faculty, staff, or student information, the Information Security Hosted Services Checklist must also be completed by UHCL’s Information Security Officer and submitted to the OCA as a component of the contract review process. More information about this part of the process will be provided to you after the Building Block Request Form has been submitted and received.

External building blocks and LTI/API integrations will not be approved if they require a separate username/password to access these external tool(s).

Building block/integration requests will be reviewed by UHCL Blackboard administrators, Blackboard support staff, and UHCL’s Information Security Officer. Some of the features that will be reviewed include the functionality of the building block/integration, security of data transfer and storage, and competing or comparable building blocks/integrations. If a request is not denied during this portion of the review, the building block/integration will be installed on a test system to ensure that the tool 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/integration will be deployed on the production system. Please note that this entire review process could take 60-90 days.

Approved external building blocks/integrations can only be enabled campus-wide. 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 UHCL’s University Computing & Telecommunications (UCT) staff within 30 days of when a building block/integration is no longer needed, or the license has expired, so it can be removed from UHCL’s Blackboard environment.

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