

# Blackboard FedRAMP Authorization Guide

*Blackboard has made significant investments into security accreditation. FedRAMP Tailored (Li-SaaS) was achieved in June 2018 and FedRAMP Moderate was achieved in April 2020 for Blackboard Learn SaaS. Blackboard is committed to continue these investments to best serve our United States Government clients requiring higher degrees of certification or operation on government networks.*



## ► Is Blackboard Learn FedRAMP authorized?

Yes. Blackboard Learn SaaS has FedRAMP Moderate authorization, which is equivalent to DOD Impact Level 2 (IL-2). Blackboard received a Moderate-level ATO (authority to operate) from NGA (National Geospatial Intelligence Agency) in September 2019. Blackboard received the Moderate authorization from the FedRAMP PMO in April 2020. Blackboard maintains both the NGA ATO and FedRAMP PMO authorizations monthly and is reassessed annually.

## ► What is the value of FedRAMP Moderate to my organization?

One of FedRAMP's core value propositions is facilitating government-wide reuse of security packages for Cloud Service Offerings (CSOs) like Blackboard. Blackboard completed the FedRAMP authorization process such that our security package can be reused by any US federal agency. Blackboard submits updates to the FedRAMP PMO monthly. These updates are also available through the PMO to any inquiring agency.

✔ Choosing a FedRAMP Moderate solution such as Blackboard provides the following benefits:

- 1✔ Substantive savings (in time and cost) and faster time to value by leveraging Blackboard's FedRAMP security documentation, on-going monitoring, and independent assessments by a third-party auditor.
- 2✔ Assurance that a consistent, best-practice set of security controls has been and will continuously be implemented – verified monthly and audited by a certified third-party auditor annually.
- 3✔ Reciprocity with DISA for Impact Level 2.
- 4✔ Ability to meet cloud procurement rules for FedRAMP only solutions.

## ► How do I access and leverage Blackboard's FedRAMP Moderate documentation?

FedRAMP developed a quick guide for agencies that outlines how to reuse a security package for a FedRAMP Authorized CSO. When reusing FedRAMP security packages, agencies should keep in mind the following best practices:

- 1📄 Review the FedRAMP Marketplace to ensure Blackboard is FedRAMP Authorized
- 2📄 Understand and implement customer responsibilities
- 3📄 Send a copy of your agency ATO letter for FedRAMP Authorized services to [info@fedramp.gov](mailto:info@fedramp.gov)

If you have any questions regarding the reuse process, please reach out to [info@fedramp.gov](mailto:info@fedramp.gov).

## ▶ What are Blackboard’s plans for IL-4, Impact Level 4? What is the timeline?

Blackboard is currently pursuing IL-4. Blackboard continually invests in our product portfolio in support of the Government teaching and learning mission, and we are committed to continued investment, including our partnership with the US Army in pursuit IL-4. We understand that the process timeline will not be in the sole control of any one party – US Army, DISA or Blackboard – but, Blackboard is committed to work collaboratively and in good faith to meet Blackboard client training timelines.

## ▶ Does my organization need IL-4?

IL-4 is required for higher classifications of training content. While FedRAMP PMO allows FOUO content at IL-2, DISA advises that FOUO content should be only held at IL-4. Most DOD agencies remain at IL-2 such that their content is available for use by DOD and non-DOD personnel via the Internet (“.com”). IL-4 systems, by DISA definition, must be behind the CAP (Common Access Point), which is no longer accessible via public Internet access. Agencies need to weigh their requirements and security controls in order to determine whether IL-2 or IL-4 is appropriate. Blackboard supports IL-2 already for dozens of clients, and is committed to pursuing IL-4 for those agencies who require it.

 In addition, Blackboard offers multiple avenues to further secure the IL-2 cloud environment including:

-  CAC authentication (for both application and content access)
-  Third party and MFA (multi-factor authentication) integration

## ▶ What if my organization requires IL-4 today?

Blackboard provides an on-premise version of Blackboard Learn software that an organization can implement on their own infrastructure and networks. Blackboard is the only LMS vendor who provides both the on-premise and SaaS offerings. In fact, many Blackboard customers use both options in production to support multiple network requirements.

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