



Blackboard

The Role of EdTech in the Government Human Resources IT Ecosystem

Human Resources IT Ecosystem: A broad set of capabilities

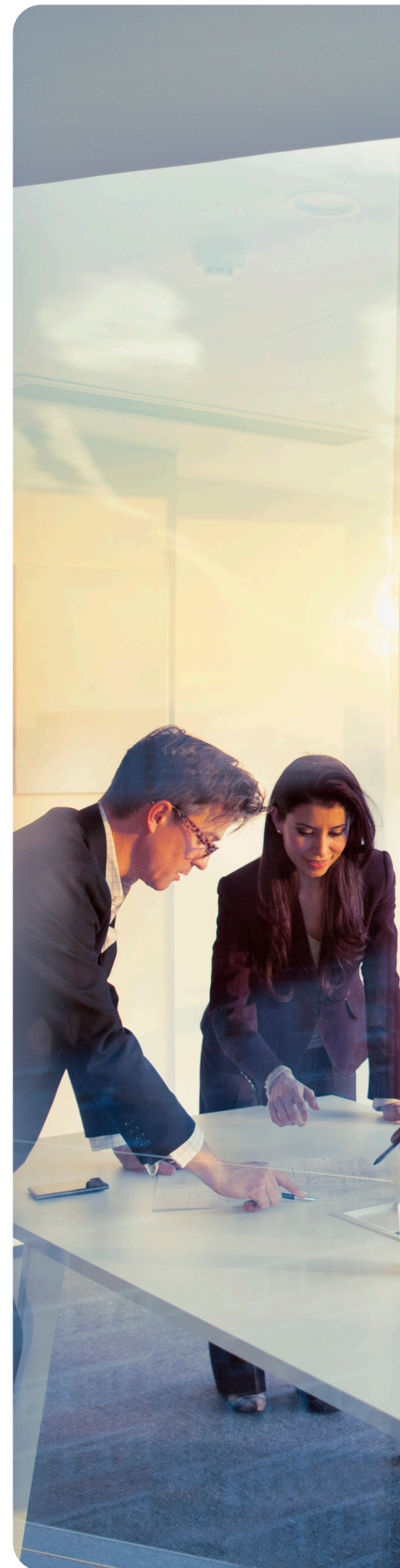
As agencies pursue mission goals, employee and stakeholder capabilities are paramount. Agencies have a long-standing discipline of talent and performance management, and ensuring their single largest asset – people – are skilled and supported to be successful. With such focus, agencies have accumulated an ecosystem of human resource systems and tools to meet their varied requirements. From on-boarding to knowledge bases, agencies have amassed technology that covers every step of the employee lifecycle. Separate systems have been developed for non-employee stakeholders that have different roles, permissions, locations and more. The ecosystem complexity ranges from home-grown applications to COTS (Commercial Off the Shelf) software, primarily hosted in commercial data centers. Within the broad function of talent management lies education – government teaching and learning, by instructors and learners, respectively.

The Beginning of EdTech in the Ecosystem

Some agencies began their EdTech (education technology) journey by leveraging their Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) or Human Resources (HR) back-office system to perform basic learning functions. This makes sense as a first step since vendors and contracts are already in place and new programs have limited requirements where these systems could fit. Other agencies began their journey by acquiring a Talent Management System (TMS) to handle compliancy training built from third party content providers. A TMS is ideal when EdTech is intended for self-paced courses, such as on-boarding or annual security and privacy training.

Growing EdTech Requirements

Over time, agencies have also built adjacent systems out of necessity, automating training management processes like registration, payment, approval workflow, reporting and resource management. Agencies have turned to enterprise licenses for web conferencing – reusing that tooling for online synchronous learning. Capabilities like gamification, badging and social tools have been added for increased learner engagement. Instructional designers have been staffed to create agency-specific content that is not available through third party providers. In tandem, agencies are modernizing, moving to cloud while also adding capabilities. Finally, agency learning programs are evolving to not only handle annual certification courses (e.g., security training), but life-long learning that supports their agency mission for the long-term. This evolution requires more than a TMS or web conferencing.



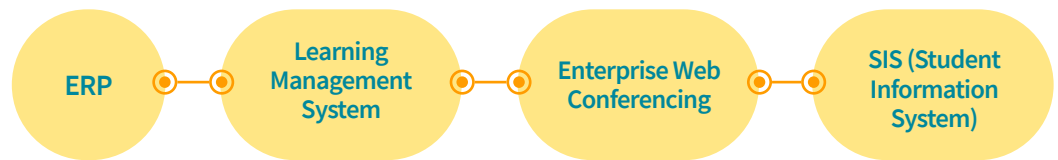


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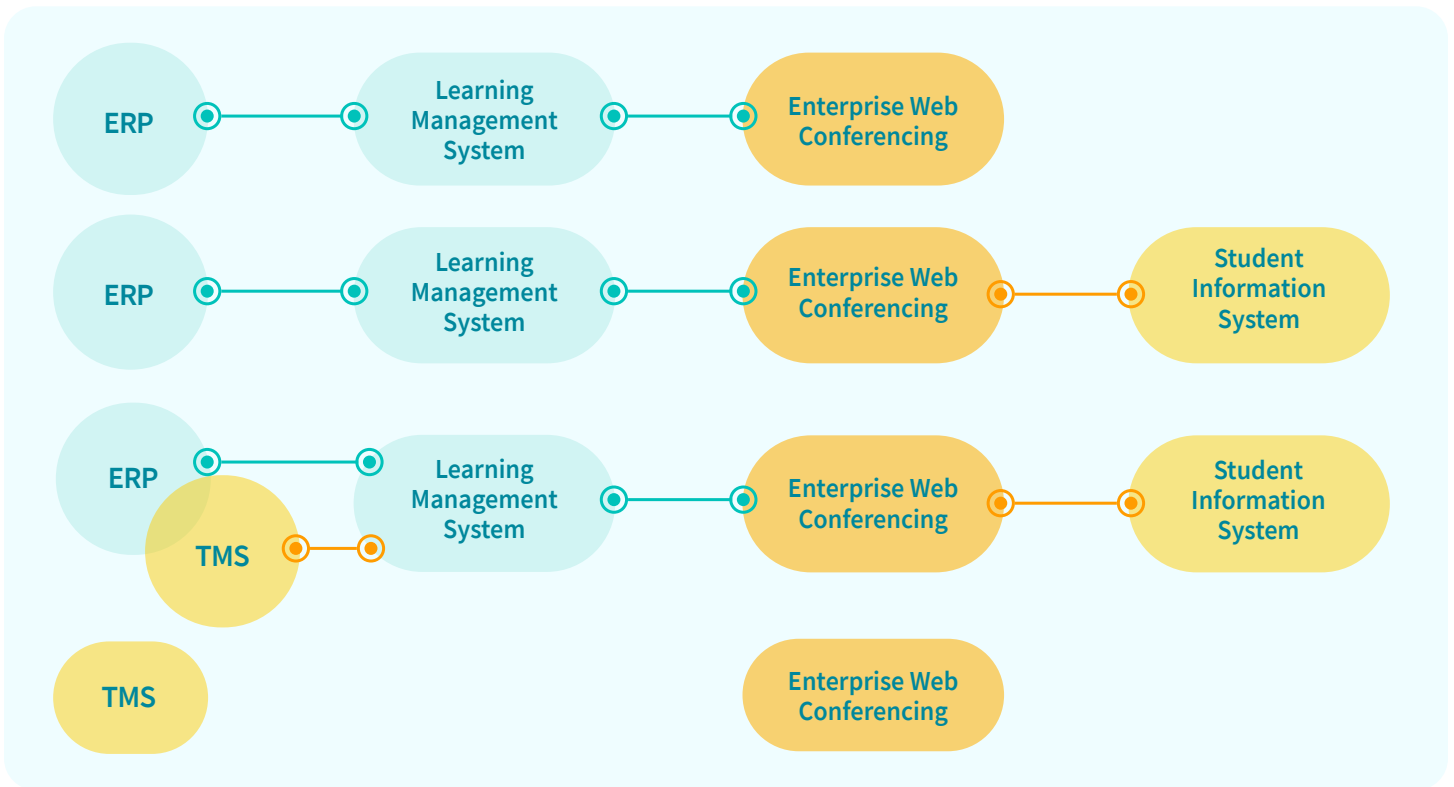
The focus on life-long learning will require academic programming and teaching & learning solutions with rich social learning aspects and content authoring tools that enable agency-developed, domain-specific course material. The common pattern that emerges in government agencies is where the ERP or TMS is used for employee self-paced learning and as the system of record, while the LMS (learning management system) and web conferencing tools are used for synchronous learning, virtual classrooms, agency-specific blended-delivery courses, and learner engagement. The LMS supports alternate use cases such as OJT (on the job), COI (communities of interest), and external (non-employee) learners.



In the academic world, as well as in certain corporate structures like associations, another pattern has emerged. In lieu of a TMS as the system of record, agencies opt for less expensive and more specialized student information systems to fit their needs. These needs primarily include use cases for external or non-employee registration including approval workflows and advanced reporting. These agencies might also have a difficult time pulling learning-specific results and reports from an ERP system that is serving much broader requirements. As such, for agencies that will not employ a TMS, registration systems have become important. They handle non-employee learners and more readily manage learning programs without overreliance on an ERP.



Why are these patterns important? As Blackboard has supported these patterns across government for over a decade, our offerings have focused to support them as well. Blackboard understands that the LMS is one component of a larger learning ecosystem, and that our technologies must follow open standards and remain flexible to integrate with other systems and agency investments. In parallel, Blackboard understands the most common functionalities required and used by our government clients, and we offer those capabilities pre-integrated with one another in order to simplify implementation and lower cost for agencies. Pre-integration also provides an integrated view for program leaders, enabling valuable insights across the ecosystem. The most common government EdTech patterns are depicted here, as well as where Blackboard supports those patterns.

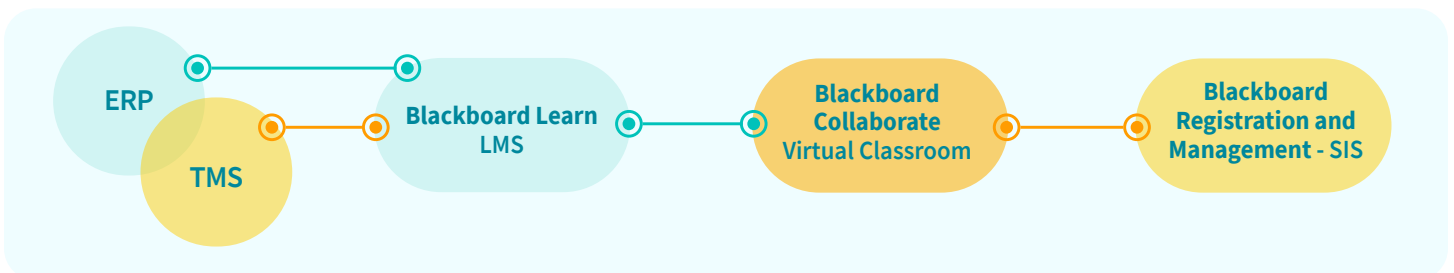


Agencies can choose any combination of vendors for each area. Many are making do with a legacy TMS and the agency web conferencing tool, the last pattern seen above. Other agencies have developed GOTS (Government off the Shelf) SIS as they worked to automate manual processes for learning program management, reporting and allowing for external learners. Some agencies rely solely on third party courses and self-paced or WBT (web-based training), available on the agency intranet or through a TMS. The now highly remote government workforce is stretching the limits of this setup. And in situations where classrooms are unavailable or travel is not an option, Blackboard allows for continuous learning to scale in real-time and accommodate varied workflows and use cases in one system.

Government EdTech patterns. ▲

Regardless of the pattern used in an agency today, or the pattern they aspire to deploy, Blackboard has a pre-integrated EdTech platform that easily links to existing agency systems and investments. Most Blackboard clients employ the pattern below, reaping the benefits of the pre-integration including lower cost, faster time to value, improved learner visibility, tools focused on teaching & learning, and management of a single vendor.

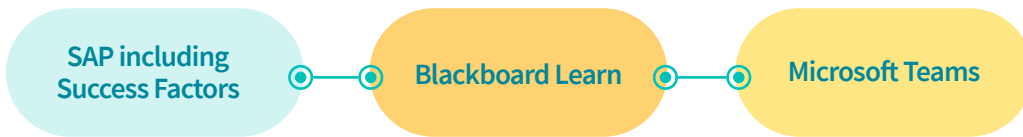
Pattern employed by most Blackboard clients. ▼



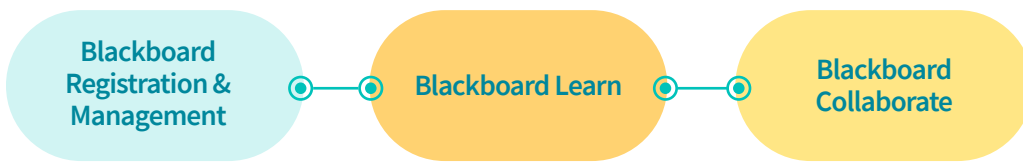
Examples of Common Ecosystem Patterns

Blackboard government clients offer multiple examples of successful patterns.

A Department of Transportation agency has integrated their ERP with both Blackboard and their enterprise web conferencing tools to support both self-paced and virtual learning, respectively. As Blackboard Learn is pre-integrated with conferencing tools like Microsoft Teams, agencies can quickly leverage their current investments in their learning ecosystem.



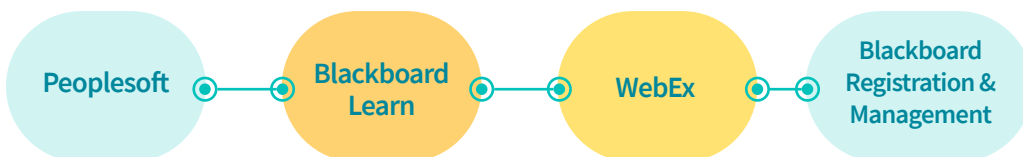
A Federal Civilian agency focused on training external stakeholders uses the pre-integrated Blackboard EdTech platform. In lieu of enterprise web conferencing tools, this agency chose Blackboard Collaborate for the seamless end-user experience, superior learner engagement analytics, and lower initial and ongoing costs that are directly tied to actual use vs. potential use.



A Defense agency integrated their TMS with Blackboard and multiple enterprise web conferencing tools. Blackboard is the LMS of choice for blended courses with online and face-to-face elements. Blackboard provides the robust content tools needed for domain-specific course content authoring, reuse, and management.



An Intelligence Community client integrated their ERP directly with Blackboard for all forms of teaching and learning. This agency has implemented Blackboard Registration and Management to offload learning management and reporting from the ERP, and to provide an avenue for non-employees (agency external stakeholders) access to courses.



Blackboard Teaching & Learning vs. Talent Management Systems

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">FOCUS</p>	<p>Is the customer requirement for a training and education solution or an HR solution for employee onboarding and talent management?</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">LEARNING MODALITIES</p>	<p>Does the customer need a flexible teaching and learning solution which will meet current and future requirements for classroom, online, instructor-led, and blended learning?</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">CONTENT AUTHORING</p>	<p>How will the customer create and store content and would they benefit from built-in content creation and content management capabilities?</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">DEPLOYMENT</p>	<p>Will the customer require flexible deployment options including SaaS and/or on premise for sensitive/classified data and disconnected networks?</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">TURNKEY</p>	<p>Does the customer require a turnkey solution, one that is easily implemented, ready-to-go, and is implemented and supported by a single vendor?</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">SOCIAL LEARNING</p>	<p>Are there requirements for social and personalized learning capabilities in the LMS?</p>

Blackboard is first and foremost a learning company and learning is all we do. Blackboard's open platform easily links to HR systems for full talent management visibility.

Talent management systems offer a broad set of functionalities vs. deep functionality in any single area. Talent management includes Recruiting, Compensation, and Succession Planning.

Blackboard has rich functionality to enable multiple learning modalities including fully virtual (self-paced, instructor-led), mixed (flipped, blended) and in-person (face-to-face).

Talent management systems are focused on compliance training, which is primarily self-paced, asynchronous, non-collaborative training.

Blackboard authoring tools allow clients to create and maintain their specialized training materials. Built in content management streamlines course creation and management.

Talent management systems primarily support canned content from 3rd party providers, with limited authoring capabilities and few content management tools.

Blackboard offers multiple deployment options including cloud and/or on-premise installations, supporting all government networks.

Most talent management systems are only offered as cloud-based solutions, with no option for on-premise software or closed government network support.

Blackboard cloud offerings are turnkey SaaS (Software as a Service) solutions. We provide solutions that include ongoing maintenance, security, support, and product innovation.

Many talent management systems are GOTS (Government Off the Shelf), such that the license, infrastructure, and services are all provided by different companies, increasing cost and complexity.

Blackboard offers rich functionality for self-reflection, collaboration, and communication online. Forums, blogs, journals, and wikis help to replicate the robust discussions that often take place in the traditional classroom.

Because Talent Management systems are not wholly focused on teaching and learning, they typically do not offer comprehensive social learning tools.

EXTERNAL
USERS

Is the solution geared toward employee lifecycle training or lifelong learning?

Blackboard is focused on lifelong learning including worker agility, whether workers are internal employees or external stakeholders. Blackboard supports structured and ad-hoc (or OJT) learning including communities of interest.

Talent Management vendors are built for corporate organizational structures and annual certification training, and have difficulty handling external learners and dynamic use cases and workflows.

ACCESSIBILITY

Are there requirements to meet Section 508 and WCAG 2.0 accessibility and that the solution support users with disabilities?

Blackboard is a recognized leader in providing accessible solutions. Beyond 508 compliance, **Blackboard Ally** offers accessibility reporting, suggests corrective action, and provides alternative content formats for course materials.

Talent Management Systems typically have varying degrees of Section 508 compliance for the user interface across their multiple products and lack capability to improve accessibility of course content.

ANALYTICS

Does the customer have requirements for insightful analytics to measure eLearning solution adoption, return on investment, learner success, or mission impact?

Blackboard provides a comprehensive, integrated, and evidence-based approach to instructor, learner and program success. Analytics are provided in context such that corrective action can be taken immediately.

Talent Management Systems provide individual tool/component level reporting, with no consolidated views of actionable analytics collected from across their distinct products. Reporting is often a separate module with no connection to corrective actions.

VIRTUAL
CLASSROOM

Is there a requirement for a virtual classroom, for online synchronous learning, to be used with a learning management system?

Blackboard offers a virtual classroom solution for synchronous learning which is integrated with its learning management system and is specifically designed for education. This provides a simpler, more effective, and secure online teaching and learning platform.

Talent Management vendors rely on 3rd party web conferencing tools which lack important LMS integration capabilities such as automatic attendance, single sign-on, persistent course sessions and online shared content.

HELPDESK
SERVICES

What are the customer's helpdesk and support requirements (for admins, eLearning staff, learners)?

Blackboard Help Desk services support users of both Blackboard and non-Blackboard technology through three regional call centers.

Talent Management vendors often outsource their helpdesk services and do not have the equivalent capacity and experience directly supporting eLearning staff and learners.

FedRAMP

Is the solution required to be FedRAMP Moderate authorized (both the datacenter/infrastructure and the SaaS application)? If not, is the customer aware of the OMB mandate that cloud solutions must be FedRAMP authorized?

Blackboard is committed to government security requirements. Blackboard Learn SaaS is FedRAMP Moderate authorized and receives the same continuous innovation and releases as all Blackboard Learn SaaS environments globally.

Talent Management vendors often offer an older software version as FedRAMP, resulting in functionality that lags behind the vendor's primary market offering.

Learning Management System (LMS)		Talent Management System (LMS)	
Teaching & Learning Solution		HR Solution	
Self Paced, Instructor Led, Blended	Built-in Content Management	Compliance Training	Limited Content Management
On Premise, SaaS	Turnkey Solution	SaaS Only	GOTS and Multi-Vendor Solution
Robust Social Learning	Continuous Platform Security	Independent Study	Forked Product Security
eLearning Accessibility	eLearning Platform Analytics	UI-only Accessibility	Tool Specific Reporting
Integrated Virtual Classroom	Full Help Desk	3rd Party Web Conferencing	Limited or Outsourced Helpdesk