

# Installation Guidelines Handbook

*For System Extensions running on the  
Blackboard  
Platform*



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## ***Introduction***

This document contains general guidelines for writing the install guide for Blackboard System Extensions.

## ***Purpose of the Install Guide***

The install guide is a document that presents the extension's usefulness and setup to the reader. It does this by introducing the reader to the architecture, leading them through the setup and configuration, and describing the extension in action. The install guide assumes knowledge of the Blackboard System.

## ***General Questions the Install Guide Should Answer***

- What can customers accomplish with the extension? What capabilities does it offer them?
- For which user roles is the extension targeted (Student, Instructor, Administrator)?
- Are there different “views” for the different roles in the Blackboard system?
- Where within the Blackboard interface will the integration take place?
- Does the install guide list all the steps necessary to carry out the installation? If you have written a separate, more detailed document for the installation, you only need to include a shorter set of general steps, with a reference to that document.
- Does the install guide refer the user to other documentation? If so, what documentation is referenced? Where can it be found?

## ***Sample Sections to include in the Install Guide***

### **Extension Overview**

Document the following:

- Extension name and version
- Extension category (this will determine which Building Blocks Catalog category in which the Extension will reside, e.g., Communication Tool, Content Authoring Tool)
- Extension size estimates
  - Archive size
  - Uncompressed size
  - Total free space required

Mention the extension name and version as it appears in the Blackboard Course Catalog. What kind of functionality does the extension provide? Discuss specifically how your

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product integrates with the Blackboard System at the architectural level (see the list of questions below). How do the components of your product exchange information with the Blackboard System?

**Essential questions** to answer in this section are:

1. Does your product interact with Black board platform data and services?
2. What APIs and Methods does it use?
3. Does the extension involve sending data to the Blackboard System? If so, the extension install guide should describe the data sent to the Blackboard System.
4. Does the extension involve communication with or sending data to an external server? If so, the extension install guide should describe the communications or data sent from Blackboard to an external server.
5. Does the extension involve receiving data from the Blackboard System? If so, the guide should describe the data retrieved from the Blackboard System.
6. Does the extension involve receiving data from an external server? If so, the guide should describe the data received from an external server.
7. What methods does the extension use within the Blackboard APIs
8. What data objects does the extension use?

## **System Requirements**

Describe the requirements of your product, in terms of operating systems, software and hardware platforms. Also mention the version of the Blackboard System that the extension requires.

An example is given below:

Blackboard System version 5.5.1  
Windows 2000 Server (includes Microsoft Internet Information Server)  
Windows 2000 (Client)  
Microsoft SQL Server 2000 must be installed on the server  
Microsoft Internet Explorer 5  
Java 2SDK, Standard Edition v. 1.2.2

## **Contact Information**

Your company:

name  
address  
city, state and zip  
telephone number  
fax number

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email address  
URL

## Support Information

name  
email address  
telephone number  
fax number  
URL  
type of support offered (web, email, phone, etc.)

## Sales Information *(if needed)*

name  
address  
city, state and zip  
telephone number  
fax number  
email address  
URL

## Installation Details

The primary purpose of this section is to describe what the customer needs to do to install and integrate your product with the Blackboard System. Depending on the complexity of this process, you may need to describe the architectural aspects in more detail. For example, if the extension uses certain APIs, you might mention the actual methods that are used. You can include diagrams that go into more detail than the diagram in the Extension Overview section.

It is often helpful to start the Installation Details section with an overview in which you list the major required steps, including installation of required software or hardware. Then, explain each step in further detail in subsequent sections. Provide examples, screenshots and diagrams where appropriate. If you have long listings to include, put them in an appendix, e.g. code samples. Clearly state any assumptions you make in the installation guide and include pointers to your product documentation when necessary.

If you provide a separate document for the installation, you can include a shorter set of general steps in this section.

Also, it is important to fully document the steps for complete uninstallation of the extension.

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## **Appendix A**

You can include long listings or output here. If such listings or scripts are available for downloading, include instructions on how to download them.

## **Appendix B**

Troubleshooting information for making it easier to resolve problems or errors that may be encountered by clients installing and configuring the System Extension.