LMS Third-Party Integration Policy

ROWAN UNIVERSITY POLICY

Title: LMS Third-Party Integration Policy
Subject: Information Resources and Technology
Policy No: IRT:2021:01
Applies: University-Wide
Issuing Authority: Senior Vice President for Information Resources and Technology and Chief Information Officer, Senior Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management and Rowan Global, and Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Responsible Officer: Senior Vice President for Information Resources and Technology and Chief Information Officer, Senior Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management and Rowan Global, and Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
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I. PURPOSE

The Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) supports the use of third-party integrated applications, learning tools, or courseware. Integrations may be any software or service that is not provided as a built-in part of Canvas and may include websites, cloud-based applications, course packs, textbook publisher content, or other software applications that integrate in some way for use within the Canvas platform. Rowan Online has established a list of tools that have been reviewed and vetted for use in Rowan Canvas courses. (See App roved Integrations). Integrations have various implementations, and new integrations have to be scrutinized for their impacts on the overall system and information security, as well as their cost to implement and operate and IRT's ability to support. The policy below governs how Rowan Online manages third-party integrations with the Canvas system.

II. ACCOUNTABILITY

Under the direction of the Chief Information Officer, the Provost, and the Senior Vice President of Strategic Enrollment Management and Rowan Global, Rowan Online shall ensure compliance with this policy. The Vice Presidents, Deans, and other members of management will implement this policy in their respective areas.

III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all Rowan University employees.

IV. DEFINITIONS

1. Integration Levels
   a. Course: The integration installation is bound to the course only and does not impact parts of the LMS system beyond the course.
   b. Account: The integration installation is bound to the account level in the LMS and impacts any courses associated with the account. This level requires sufficient testing to ensure that courses associated with the given account are not negatively impacted.
   c. System: The integration installation is bound to the entire system or root level in the LMS and impacts all users and courses. This level requires the most testing and vetting to ensure that courses and users across the entire system are not negatively impacted.
   d. Pass-Through vs. Deep Integration

      i. Pass-Through: The integration installation and functionality is such that it serves as a single sign-on feature for its users where all functionality other than authentication is controlled by the third-party system. Effectively, the LMS passes user credentials to the integration's application.

      ii. Deep: The integration installation and functionality allows two-way data transmission between the LMS and the third-party application (e.g., grading information is shared for assignments).

2. LTI: The integration employs the IMS Global Learning Consortium Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) standard. This is a standard protocol for secure data exchange between any Learning Management System and another software.

3. API: The integration employs the Application Programmer Interface (API) often required for a Deep integration. API integrations require system authorization, thorough security evaluation, and significant testing.

4. Single Sign-On (SSO): An authentication process that allows a user to log in with a single ID and password to any of several related, yet independent, software systems. For LMS third-party integrations, log in happens when users access the LMS. Integrations that employ SSO receive user authentication credentials from the LMS.

Refer to the Rowan University Technology Terms and Definitions for all other terms and definitions that are used in this policy.

V. POLICY

1. Approved Integrations

   a. The vendors/products listed in the Approved tab of List of LMS Third-Party Canvas Integrations have third-party integrations that are installed and approved for use system-wide within the LMS. These third-party integrations were approved after careful evaluation through Rowan Online and Information Resources & Technology.

2. List of Integrations

   a. Rowan employees are encouraged to visit and review the List of LMS Third-Party Canvas Integrations. The list has three tabs:

      i. Approved: Integrations on this list are readily available for use.
      ii. Requested: Integrations on this list have been requested and are under review.
      iii. Not Approved: Integrations on this list have been reviewed have not been approved. Notes are provided to help explain why the integration was not approved.

3. How to Use Integrations

   a. Instructors may install or activate approved integrations at will into any course where they are enrolled as an instructor. Instructions for installation, activation, and use vary by integration. For assistance, please submit a request to support@rowan.edu.

4. Limitation of Support

   a. Be advised that for many third-party integrations, Rowan Online's ability to provide technical support is limited to the integration implementation. That is, for integrations where content and services are primarily hosted on systems operated and maintained by the integration vendor, it is likely that the vendor is solely responsible for support. In such cases, Rowan Online cannot provide remedy for issues with the vendor's courseware, application, or related systems. Instructors are advised to consider responsiveness and reputation of a third-party integration vendor prior to adoption. Issues submitted to Rowan Online support for integrations where the integration vendor provides primary support will be remitted to the vendor and/or the instructor for the course.

5. Requests for New Integration

   a. Process Overview

    i. Rowan Online has a request, review, and approval process for considering new third party integrations with the Canvas system. Any member of Academic Affairs may submit a request at any time for Rowan Online to consider a new integration.

As such integrations can have lasting impact on a variety of operational areas (security, support, training, instructional design services, etc.), Rowan Online carefully considers each request and depends on the scrutiny of the Division of Information Resources & Technology (IRT) to ensure universal and sustainable support for approved integrations. In addition, the Senate Technology Resources Committee, under the guidance of the Provost's Office, will be responsible for prioritizing multiple, concurrent requests and for determining a preferred integration for academic use in the event that there are requests for integrations offering similar services and features.

The time to complete the process of evaluating and implementing an integration varies with size and scope of the project and is dependent on available resources. For this reason, requests should be made as far in advance as possible. Requestors will be informed about evaluation progress and estimated launch dates during the evaluation and implementation processes.

b. Factors Considered

    i. Compliance with FERPA regulations for protecting student information and data
    ii. Cost and who will pay (IRT, academic departments, Rowan Global, etc.)
    iii. Security, including University responsibility, liability, and other security and privacy concerns for student, employee, and University data to be transmitted to and/or from a third party
    iv. Impact on other Rowan policies, agreements, and applications
    v. Impact on Rowan Online's ability to support students using the third-party integration
    vi. Impact on existing Rowan Online courses, programs, and other operations
    vii. Is the integration a duplication of existing technologies and services?
    viii. Requirements for students to agree to third party terms of service, including the use of student personally identifiable information (PII)
    ix. Level of integration functionality with respect to access to similar services without the need for integration
        1. Is the integration *pass-through or deep*?
        2. Is there value to the integration such that the effort to implement and maintain the integration is justified?
    x. Are the appropriate resources available for developing guides, training, communication to users, etc., based on the level of impact of the integration?
    xi. What is the reputation of the vendor providing the integration, and does Rowan University have a history with that vendor? If not, have peer and/or aspirant institutions worked with that vendor?

c. Request Process

    i. To request that Rowan Online consider a new third-party integration, the Rowan Online Third-Party Integration Questionnaire must be completed by a single internal sponsor or primary point of contact.

        1. Rowan employees (faculty, staff, and administrators) may submit a request at any time using the Third-Party Integration Questionnaire. You must log in to Google with your Rowan NetID account in order to complete the form.
        2. Requests are reviewed on a rolling basis. The intake form outlines the processing procedure and associated timelines.
        3. Turnaround times from the date of request submission to implementation of the integration into the production LMS may be shorter or longer depending on factors like vendor response times, technical issues during implementation and testing, or complexity of the integration.

4. Exceptions to deadlines and/or turnaround timelines will be considered with justification clarifying extenuating circumstances provided in writing to the Rowan Online department.

d. Review and Evaluation

   i. The Rowan Online department will conduct an initial evaluation of each request. Information collected in the questionnaire is thoroughly reviewed and considered against the factors outlined in section V.5.b. Additional information may be collected by the committee as deemed necessary during the evaluation process. Testing of the integration may commence in the LMS Test environment in order to confirm integration operation and evaluate overall potential impact to the system and users.

   ii. Priority is given to requests that will benefit the greatest number of users.

   iii. After the Rowan Online evaluation, the University Senate Technology Resources sub-committee under the guidance of the Provost's Office:
      1. Will advise Rowan Online as to how to prioritize multiple, concurrent requests
      2. Will determine a preferred integration for academic use in the event that there are requests for integrations offering similar services and features

   iv. Approved submissions are endorsed by the internal evaluation committee and the Rowan Online department head. A determination will be made for the approved level of integration (course, account, or system). Rowan Online will work with the requestor to submit an IRT ITAP request as outlined in section V.5.e.

   v. Declined submissions will be provided a reason as to why the committee chose not to endorse the third-party integration. The requestor has the right to appeal to the Rowan Online department head in writing.

e. ITAP (IRT) Evaluation

   i. Following the internal evaluation outlined in section V.5.d, Rowan Online will work with the requestor to submit an ITAP request to IRT. IRT will further evaluate the third-party integration application based on its own evaluation criteria governed under the Information Technology Acquisition Policy and handled via the Information Technology Acquisition Process (ITAP), including an information security analysis. Integrations that are approved by ITAP will be staged and implemented into Rowan Online's production learning management system.

f. Implementation

   i. Integrations that have been approved by Rowan Online as outlined in section V.5.d and by the ITAP process as outlined in section V.5.e will be scheduled for implementation into the production LMS environment. Rowan Online will provide an expected date to launch the integration into the Canvas environment. However, requestors are advised that various factors may impact the implementation time, including vendor response to Rowan Online needs for customer service and support.

g. Annual Review

   i. Rowan Online will conduct an annual review of existing integrations in the middle of each academic year and determine if any integrations should be considered for decommission. Decommissioning of an integration will consider (but is not limited to) the following:

      1. Integrations that have not been used for a period of at least one academic year.
      2. Integrations that have experienced frequent or regular technological and/or support issues as documented by Rowan Online and/or IRT.
      3. Integrations where the vendor has announced an end of life with an end of support date and said date is approaching or has passed, or a deviation from their original security and privacy standards
      4. Integrations for which funding has been removed, is coming to an end, or for which costs of licensing/operation have increased significantly.
      5. Integrations that may be replaced by a University-wide standard application /integration.

Following its annual review, Rowan Online will provide a list of proposed changes to existing integrations and supporting documentation to the University Senate Technology Resources sub-committee under the guidance of the Provost's Office. The University Senate Technology Resource sub-committee will have 30 days from receipt of the list to approve proposed changes. Rowan Online will implement changes following approval.

By Direction of the CIO:

Mira Lalovic-Hand,
SVP and Chief Information Officer