What is Blackboard Collaborate Ultra?

Collaborate Ultra is a high-quality, browser-based web conferencing solution that makes distance teaching and learning simpler. Collaborate Ultra can be used for distance education courses, virtual office hours or online meetings.

Requirements:
To join a Collaborate session you will need the following:
- Internet Access (broadband connection highly recommended)
- Soundcard with microphone and headphones (A headset with microphone/headphones is recommended)
- Webcam (optional)

Collaborate Ultra works best in Google Chrome; Firefox and Safari are also compatible.

GETTING STARTED

1. Locate the Plus sign (+) at the top-left corner of the Course Menu on Blackboard Learn and hover your mouse over it. Once you do, you will see the menu as shown in the picture below.
2. Click on Tool Link. Enter Collaborate in the space provided for “name”.
3. Select Blackboard Collaborate Ultra from the dropdown menu in the “type” area.
4. To make this new content area available to users, check the “Available to Users” box.
5. Click “Submit”. After you submit, a link to Collaborate appears on the course menu.

CREATING SESSIONS

You can create sessions by clicking on the “Create Session” button.

A panel will open on the right where you can configure session settings. First, input a name for that session. It could be the name of the course and the date or the main team of that session.
When you input the session name, a guest link will appear on the screen. If you wish, you can send the copy of the guest link to your students or other guests. This is optional. If you don't want to invite any guests to this session, uncheck guest access. You can specify participant, presenter, moderator roles for guests. For more information about these roles, please see Session Settings section below.

A. Event Details
1. Select a start/end date/time for the session.
2. If you would like to create a session that is open 24/7 the entire semester, check the box for No End (Open Session). You may select Repeat Session if you would like to create multiple weekly sessions at once, rather than create them individually.
3. Early Entry: This allows users to enter the session in advance of the start time. This is a good practice as it allows users to get their microphone and webcam properly set up.
4. Description: This is optional. You may enter a description of the session that will appear in Blackboard for students.

B. Session Settings
Click on “Session Settings” to expand the menu.

1. Default Participant Role: By default all the participants are given participant role. If you wish, you can assign presenter or moderator roles as well. You can change these roles during the session as well.
   - Participant: Enable and disable notifications; participate in a session using permissions that moderator allows (e.g. chat, microphone, drawing on whiteboard).
   - Moderator: Full control over all content being shared; can make any participant a presenter or moderator; see notifications and lower hands; alter participant permissions.
   - Presenter: Allows participants to present without giving them full moderator privileges; can upload, share, edit, and stop sharing content; see notifications and lower hands.

2. Recording: Allow recording downloads from the Recordings page as well as on the recording play back page. If this box is not checked, students will be able to stream any recordings that are available.
   If you want to see the participants’ (students) names in the recordings, leave “Anonymize chat messages” box unchecked.

3. Moderator Permissions: Checking this box prevents participants from seeing each other’s profile pictures. Share profile pictures or show the profile pictures of moderators only.
4. **Participants can:** Here is where you can enable/disable permissions that participants have. These can also be altered within the session itself. The options include share their audio, share their video, post chat messages, and draw on whiteboard and files. Click on the boxes of the settings you want to enable. A green arrow means the setting is enabled for the participants.

5. **Enable Session Telephony:** By default, this box is checked, allowing participants to use their telephones to connect to the session's audio. Because using the telephone is an alternative for participants whose computer speakers and microphone are not working, we recommend keeping this option selected. However, please remember that students have the option of joining the session using the Blackboard mobile application.

6. **Private Chats:** When selected, moderators can see everything that is said in private chat channels. An alert appears at the top of the private chat channel informing users that the chat is being supervised. If you don’t select it, you don’t see the private chat channels.

   Finally, do not forget to click **Save**.

**EDITING SESSIONS**

1. **Session Options:** Locate the session you wish to edit or delete and click the menu button to the right of the session.
   - Select **Edit settings** to edit the session information.
   - Select **Delete session** to delete the session. A dialog box will then pop up asking you if you want to confirm deleting the session.
   - Select **View reports** to view session attendance reports. For more information, see page 12.
   - Select **Copy guest link** to copy the session link and share it with other participants or to create a link in the content area.

2. **Search Sessions:** Select Search to filter the meeting list. Type a specific session name or date.

3. **Show Sessions:** Select to view upcoming, previous, or in range sessions.

**NOTE:** By default, every Blackboard course has a **Course Room** that is enabled. This room is open 24/7, and to enter it, just click the **Join room** link that is available. However, if you do not want students to have access to a room that is open 24/7 or you would prefer to use scheduled sessions, you may lock this room:

1. Click the "Course Room Options" button on the right side of you screen.
2. Select "Lock Course Room".
ENTERING A SESSION

After you’ve created your session, click the link you created for it in order to access the session.

The session will open and begin loading. You may be prompted to allow the browser to use your webcam and microphone. Be sure to click Allow or Yes to these prompts from Collaborate.

Next, you’ll complete an Audio Test and Video Test to ensure your microphone and webcam are working. For each, if the component is working, click “Yes—it’s working”.

You will then be in your Collaborate session. Other participants can join by clicking the link in the Collaborate Ultra area of your course.

MODERATOR’S MAIN SCREEN

You will see the description of each of these features below.
1. **Session Menu**: Click on this button on the top left corner of the screen and see the options to start recording, switch between telephony and computer audio, and to leave the session.

2. **My Settings**: Click on this icon to access My Settings window and add a photo (a).

   - **(b)** Click on “Present” to send your status or feedback to participants.

   - **(c)** Click on “Set up your camera and microphone” to check your audio and video settings.
(d) You can also generate a phone number for telephone audio, change your notification settings.

3. **Share Audio**: Clicking this icon will toggle your microphone off and on.
4. **Share Video**: Clicking this icon will toggle your video off and on.
5. **Raise Hand**: Clicking this icon will alternately “raise” or “lower” your hand. Participants may use this option to get the moderator’s attention when they have a question or comment.

6. **Collaborate Panel**: Clicking this icon opens the Collaborate Panel, where you can access the Chat, Participant List, Share Content, and My Settings menus.

After opening the Collaborate Panel, click on the **Chat button** to open the Chat window.

Clicking on “Everyone” will allow to switch between chatting with all participants and chatting with moderators only.

Type your message in the “Say something” field and use the Enter key on your keyboard to send the message.

Click on the smiley face button to send an emoticon.
Click on the icon for the Participant List.

Click the Option button to the left of the participant you wish to change or dismiss.

7. **Content Display**: Video, whiteboard, and shared files will be displayed here.

Click on “Share Content” icon.

**Using the Whiteboard**

Select **Share Blank Whiteboard**.
The Whiteboard Tools are located in the upper left-hand corner of the screen (a). The View Controls allow you to zoom in and out of the drawing area (b).

**Sharing files using the Whiteboard**

Select Share Files. Add the file you want to upload and click on “Share Now”.

Once your selected file has been uploaded, it needs to be processed. During the processing, the file or presentation is converted to a Whiteboard that can then be shared and marked up i.e. annotated if desired. Each slide in a PowerPoint file, or each page in a PDF is converted to a separate Whiteboard page.

**Please note** that the PowerPoint slides which contain animations or slide builds are converted to static images when placed in a Whiteboard. For more information watch the [video here](#).

Please also note that if you need to share a file that is larger than 60 MB, you should use the Share Application feature instead.

When the file is processed, it appears on the Whiteboard along with all the Whiteboard tools so that you can mark up the slides as you are giving your presentation if you wish. To navigate through the slides, click the "→" or "←" slide controls. You can also re-open or close the slide navigator panel by clicking on the PowerPoint Presentation name. When you are finished sharing, click the **Stop Sharing** button in the upper right hand corner of the screen.
To go back to the “Share Content” panel, click on “<” symbol near “Slides” on top of the panel.

You can decide if you want to give participants the ability to use the Whiteboard tools during the presentation in the Session Settings. You can uncheck the green checkboxes according to your preferences.

Using Application Sharing

Select “Share Application” from the menu. Choose whether you want to share your entire screen or a just an application. Click on the relevant button.

If you do not have the Desktop Sharing extension installed in your web browser, click the button to install it. Click the “Add to Chrome” and then “Add extension” buttons to install the extension.

After installing the Extension, go back to the Collaborate Panel, click on the “Share Content” button and choose the Share Application option.
A dialog box with thumbnails of all open applications will appear on screen. **Select** the application you want to share and then click the **Share** button. To end application sharing, click on the **Stop Sharing** button in the upper right hand corner of the screen.

**Polling**

Polls could be used for many different reasons. For example, you may use polls to give the participants opportunities to participate and provide feedback, to start a discussion, or to see how well they understood what you presented. Prepare your question in advance. You may wish to raise it orally during the session, or prepare it on the Whiteboard so that participants can refer to it while deciding on which option to select.

Open the Collaborate Panel and select **Polling**. Then select the number of choices that best meets your needs and click Start on the bottom of the panel.

To prevent participants from changing their answers, click the **Lock Poll** button.

To end the poll, click the **End Polling** button in the upper right hand corner.

For more information watch the [video here](#).
SESSION RECORDINGS

Recording a session

Click on this button on the top left corner and expand the menu. Select Start Recording.

Viewing a session recording

To view Collaborate Ultra recordings, go to the Collaborate link in Blackboard Learn and click on the menu icon on the top left corner.

Click on Recordings in the left-hand menu.

Click on the link of the session you want to watch.

You can download and delete recordings on this page. You must allow session recording downloads for each session if you wish to download the recordings. Open a session’s Session Settings, and check “Allow download recording”.

Note: Recorded sessions are not posted immediately in Blackboard. It could take up to 30 minutes for them to appear.
ACCESSING SESSION ATTENDANCE REPORTS

Click on the Collaborate link in the main menu of your course in **Blackboard Learn**. Then, click on the **Sessions Options** button for the Session that you wish to view an attendance report and click on **View Reports** from the drop-down menu.

To view the Session Attendance Report for a particular session, click on the View Report icon corresponding to that session.

The Attendance Report is displayed as shown below. You can click on the Printable link under **Export Report** to view a printable version of the Session Attendance Report in a new tab in your browser. You can print the report using your browser’s print function. To use that function, go to the browser’s **File** menu and choose **Print**. On the print screen, you can also use “Save” option to save each session attendance report on your computer as a pdf file.
COLLABORATE ON MOBILE DEVICES

The Blackboard Instructor application includes Collaborate with the Ultra experience for synchronous web conferencing. You can host virtual classes and share files and video. You don't have to install anything other than Blackboard Instructor app to join a session. You can share video and use voice, whiteboard, and chat. Please note that you need to use the browser view of Collaborate for the full range of moderator capabilities.

For detailed information:

https://help.blackboard.com/Blackboard_App/Instructor
https://help.blackboard.com/Blackboard_App/Instructor/Feature_Guide
https://help.blackboard.com/Blackboard_App/Instructor/Collaborate