Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Guide for Students

What is Blackboard Collaborate?

*Collaborate* is an online virtual classroom/meeting space which allows users to connect via audio, see each other via webcams, use a chat tool, collaborate on documents and view presentations, as well as other features.

What do you need?

1. **Working PC, Mac or mobile devices:** Sessions are hosted in your browser. We recommended that you use **Google Chrome (latest version)** as a browser to access the session. If you want to use an iPhone or iPad to access the Collaborate session, you will need to install the **Blackboard** app first.
2. **Internet connection:** The faster your web connection the better **Collaborate** will work, although a regular broadband connection should prove sufficient.
3. **Headsets and microphone:** if you are required to talk in the session, you will need a headset with a microphone (either built-in or plugged-in).
4. **Webcam:** You will also need a camera. Your computer may have one built in. If not, get one that sits on top of the computer.

Where can I access it? And Join the Session

The link to access the BB Collaborate session for your paper will normally be provided by your lecturer under a menu item eg **Collaborate** in your course. Please use the **Join Course Room** link via the **Get secure link** option on the page to access the session.
OR – Instead of Join Course Room, you might see named sessions.

Please use the Join session link to access the Collaborate session.

**What does Collaborate look like?**

Below is how a Collaborate screen will look (generally) when you are in a session with your lecturer.

The screenshot above is called the ‘Media space’ view. You can also switch it to Grid view and Follow the speaker view.
Content your lecturer shares is automatically the main focus of your screen. The picture-in-picture shows you who is speaking. If content is not shared, the focus is on participant profiles and video. You can switch between a grid view and a view that follows the speaker. With the follow-the-speaker view, the focus moves to the current speaker as the discussion unfolds.

**Audio and Video Set Up - Be seen and heard.**

When you are in the session, the first thing that you will need to check is your audio and video set up to make sure that you can be seen and heard.

To set up, go to your **Avatar icon -> My Settings**

You must give the browser permission to use audio and video to participate in a session. **This is necessary** so that you are seen and heard. You can set up audio and video at any time in My Settings. Point to your avatar to open My Settings.

Adjust your speaker and microphone volume. By default, you are hidden and muted after you complete the setup. Click the microphone and camera icons to begin full meeting participation.

**Chat tool - Talk in the session using text.**

If you prefer to use text to chat with your peers and lecturers, you can use the **Chat Tool**. You can access the tool via the bubble icon in Collaborate Panel.

**Participant List**

The **Participant List** is a tool for you to see who else is in the session. When you join a session, check this place first to make sure you know who the audience are.
Add a Profile Picture - Make it personal.

Give a face to your voice and add a profile picture in your Avatar -> My Settings. Point to the avatar image to change the picture. Upload any image or use your device camera to take a photo. You can choose to use this profile picture for every session. Adjust the image area and click I Like it! to save the profile picture.

Content Tools

You may be required by your lecturer to contribute to the resources/content that is shared on the whiteboard. You can choose how you will contribute by selecting tools in the Content Tools area.

- **Select:** Use the arrow to select an object on the whiteboard. After you select it you can resize, move, and delete it.
- **Pointer:** Use the hand to point to different areas of the visible slide. Participants see wherever you are pointing on the slide.
- **Pencil:** Use the pencil to draw free hand on the slide.
- **Square:** Use the square to draw a rectangle, ellipse, or a straight line. Your choice.
- **Text:** Type text on the slide with the "T".
- **Erase:** Use the eraser to undo everything you or another moderator has added to the slide with one click.

Participate in a session with ease

- **Join the session early.** Give yourself time to learn what you can and can't do in the session. Add a profile picture and set up your audio and video. If you are presenting, make sure you can share content. Practice using the tools.
- **Mute yourself when not speaking.** Nothing is more distracting than background noise. For example, typing or a private conversation. It can also give the impression that you aren't paying attention.
- **Use the green tick icon by your avatar to Set as Away** to let everyone know that you are not available for any response.
- **Put your hands up** if you would like to ask a question while others are talking or to indicate that you would like to talk.
Useful resources

Introduction video to the Collaborate Ultra user interface: https://www.youtube.com/embed/gh5zsbGW7V0?rel=0

Further information on Collaborate Ultra: https://en-us.help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/Ultra/Participant/010_Get_Started