Getting Started with Collaborate:

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Blackboard Collaborate

Blackboard Collaborate is a new Webcampus tool that you can use to enhance fully online and blended courses. By providing lectures online faculty members are able to spend more time working with students during their face to face meetings, rather than lecturing. Face-to-face meeting can be focused on students applying what they have learned from the online lecture.

To stream a lecture using Collaborate, faculty members will need an Internet connection and a microphone. Faculty members with a web camera will also be able to stream video.

Creating a Collaborate Session

First log in to Webcampus and navigate to a course. Go to the Course Management Panel on the left side and click the “Control Panel” link to expand the menu. Click the “Course Tools” link to expand the menu, then click the “Blackboard Collaborate” link (See figure 1).

Figure 1: Clicking the Blackboard Collaborate link
Click the “Create Session” button on the Blackboard Collaborate List page (See figure 2).

![Figure 2: Clicking the Create Session button](image)

The default title for all Collaborate sessions will be your course title. Click the “Session Name” field and enter a title for the Session you want to create (See figure 3).

![Figure 3: Clicking the Session Name field and entering a title](image)

By default, all sessions must be scheduled. The Date options are located in the Schedule group. Click in the Start Time field and a menu will expand. Set the Start Time and End Time of the Session by clicking the day for the Session. Next slide the bar to set the hour and the minute of the start period (See figure 14). Repeat the previous steps for the “End Time” field (See figure 4).
Attendees may experience some issues joining their first Web Conference. **The default time during which attendees will be able to join the session is 15 minutes early.** If you want to allow your students to enter the session more than 15 minutes early, click on the drop down menu in the Early session entry field and select the appropriate option (See figure 5).
These attributes have default settings set by the Blackboard administrator. The three most important settings in this group are the maximum number of talkers, maximum number of cameras, and View Private Messages option. You should select the settings based on the focus of the session you are creating.

The Max Simultaneous Talkers setting is where you can select how many participants can talk at once. Change the number of talkers by clicking the drop down menu and selecting the appropriate number (See figure 6).

![Figure 6: Setting the maximum number for max simultaneous talkers](image)

Review the number of cameras that will be allowed at the start of the session. The default for a session is six. Change the number of cameras by clicking the drop down menu then selecting the number of cameras. It is possible to share up to six cameras simultaneously at the start of the session. Moderators can disable participants’ cameras at any time during a session in the Participants menu (See figure 7).
Sessions can be integrated with your course’s Webcampus gradebook. Begin by clicking the Grade Center Integration link to expand the menu (See figure 8).

Click the Add a grade column button to “ON”, then enter the number of possible points for the Grade Column. If a column already exists in your Gradebook prior to the session’s creation, delete that column before creating the integrated session (See figure 9)
Figure 9: Entering the number of possible points associated with a session

Select the “Save” button in the lower right hand corner of your screen to create the session.
Installing Blackboard Collaborate Launcher

*Blackboard now requires that users have Blackboard Collaborate Launcher installed on the computer they plan to attend a session with. The instructions below cover the process needed to check your systems compatibility as well as the process faculty need to follow to install the application Collaborate Launcher.

Start by checking to make sure that the computer and web browser that you plan on using to attend the Collaborate session is compatible with Blackboard Collaborate. Do so by holding the Ctl key on your keyboard while clicking the following link: Testing your computer’s Compatibility.

After clicking the link above a web browser will launch taking you to the Collaborate Web Conferencing – First time Users page. A message will display telling you if your system meets the requirements (See figure 10).

Blackboard Collaborate requires that facilitators and participants have Collaborate Launcher installed on their computer. Do so by scrolling down to “Step 2: Configuring your system” group on the Webpage and clicking a Configuration Room (See figure 11).
STEP 2: Configuring your system

We provide a Configuration Room that you can use to test your connection, settings, and configure your audio. This step is optional and is intended for sessions hosted on Blackboard Collaborate servers. To test your configuration for sessions hosted at your Organization’s site, please contact your Administrator.

![Image of Configuration Room links]

You will be taken to the Download Launcher Page. Click on the first drop down menu, select your operating system, and then click the “Download>>” button (See figure 12).

![Image of Download Launcher]

Depending on the web browser that you are using, the launch file may be saved in different locations. Navigate to the downloaded file titled “BlackboardCollaborateLauncher-Win.msi” (PC) or “BlackboardCollaborateLauncher-Mac.zip” (MAC) and click “Run”.

![Image of Downloaded file location and Run button]
If you are using MS Internet Explorer, a link will be displayed in a yellow bar at the top of your browser (See figure 13).

![Figure 13: Clicking “Run” for MS Internet Explorer](image)

If you are using Google Chrome, the link for the file will be located the lower left hand corner of your web browser (See figure 14).

![Figure 14: Launching the installer for Google Chrome](image)

If you are using a Mac Java may prompt you for permission to download and run the collaborate launcher. Click the “Always run on this site” button (See figure 15).

![Figure 15: Clicking the “Always run on this site” option](image)

If you are using Safari as a web browser it will automatically unzip and run the file. If you are using the Google Chrome or Fire Fox on a Mac you will need to navigate to the downloads folder and unzip then install the software.

The Blackboard Collaborate Launcher Setup window will now appear. Click the “Next >” button, then click the “Install” button, followed by the “Finish” button (See figure 16).
When you have completed running the Blackboard Collaborate Setup Wizard, return to the Downloading Installer page in your browser and click “Join” to confirm that you have successfully installed the software (See figure 17).

The Blackboard Collaborate “Select connections speed:” menu will appear (See figure 18). There is no need to proceed any further. You have successfully installed Blackboard Collaborate Launcher.
Figure 18: You have successfully installed Collaborate Launcher
How to access the Collaborate Session

You can access sessions from the Bb Collaborate List Page. Click the **Collaborate** link in the Course Tools group of the Control Panel, then click the Title of the Session you want to join (See figure 19).

![Figure 19: Clicking the session title](image)

Click the “**Join Room**” button to enter session. If Collaborate Launcher does not automatically start navigate to the Downloads folder and click on the meeting.collab file to join the session (See figure 20).

![Figure 20: Clicking the Join Room link](image)
You will receive a Security Warning prior to Collaborate launching. If you do not want to see this message every time you join a session, click the “Do not show this again for apps from the publisher and location above” check box, then click the “Run” button to launch Collaborate (See figure 21).

![Security Warning](image)

**Figure 21: Reviewing and setting the Security options**

The first time you join a Collaborate session you need to accept the Participant Agreement. Do so by clicking the “Accept” button (See figure 22).

![Accept Window](image)

**Figure 22: Accept Window**

You will need to specify your Internet connection speed. If you don’t know your Internet connection speed, please contact University Technical Assistance Center. Prior to contacting UTAC you should have you Faculty I.D number available. UTAC can be reached by calling the following number 973.443.8822.
To select your Internet speed click the “Select connection speed:” field, then select your connection speed from the drop down menu. Then click the “OK” button (See figure 23).

![Figure 23: Specify the Internet connection speed](image)

You can change your Internet connection speed selection at anytime during a session. Click the “Edit” option, then “Preferences” from the drop down menu. Next click “Connection” from the Session group of the preferences menu. Then click the “Connection Speed:” drop down menu and select your Internet speed from the drop down menu.

To allow access to all features in Collaborate, click the “Allow access” button on the Windows Security Alert window (See figure 24).

![Figure 24: Clicking the Allow access button](image)
**How to share a Collaborate Session with your Students:**

The best way to share a Collaborate session with you students is to add a link online. First navigate to the Collaborate menu. Next mouse over the right side of the Session’s title and click the arrow icon when it appears (See figure 25).

![Figure 25: Clicking the chevron icon](image)

The icon will expand, listing the options for the Session. To add a link to the Collaborate session to a Content Area in your Webcampus course, click the “Add Link” link (See figure 26).

**NOTE:** The content area in Webcampus you want to add a link to must exist prior to clicking the “Add Link” option.

![Figure 26: Clicking the Add Link](image)
You will be taken to the Add Link page where you will specify which area of your Webcampus course you would like for the students to access the Session from. Click the Course Materials check box (See figure 27).

![Add Link to the Content Area](image)

**Course Link Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Link Name</th>
<th>WebcampusTraining</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Area List</td>
<td>□ Collaborate Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ □ Course Materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 27: Selecting the content area to add a link to

Next provide a description for the Collaborate Session you will share with your students. Do so by clicking and expanding the “Details” group of the Course Link Options (See figure 28).

![Course Link Options](image)

**Course Link Options**

- Details
- Date Restrictions

Figure 28: Expanding the Details group
Descriptions are beneficial to students because they can help students understand what kind of link they are clicking on and why faculty are providing them with the link. Click in the Descriptions text box then type your description in the field (See figure 29).

![Figure 29: Providing a description for the Session](image)

To finalize your link to the Collaborate session from a content area in Webcampus click the “Submit” button located in the lower right hand corner of the menu.

As a reminder, you will probably want to delete the link in your Webcampus content area after the session has ended.
Enabling Guest Access for an Existing Collaborate Session

You can allow guests who are not enrolled in your Webcampus course (for example colleagues) to access your Collaborate session by modifying that session. Start by mousing over the right side of the Session’s title. You will see an arrow appear (See figure 30).

Figure 30: Mousing over the arrow

The icon will expand, listing the options for the Session. To link your Collaborate Session to a Content Area in your Webcampus course, click the “Allow Guests” link (See figure 31).

Figure 31: Clicking the Edit Session link
The Allow Guests menu will appear. Click to switch the Allow Guests button from OFF to “ON” (See figure 32).

![Figure 32: Switching the Allow Guests button ON](image)

The Public URL field has become active. You may now share the URL in one of two ways. You may copy and paste the URL into an email message. Or you may enter the email address(es) of the Guest(s) into the “Add guests to invite” field the click and “Add” button (See figure 33).

![Figure 33: Selecting the appropriate method for sharing the Guests link](image)
Blackboard Collaborate interface

The control panel on the left is where you enable your audio and video stream, view participants, and chat (See figure 34).

Figure 34: Blackboard Collaborate interface
We suggest that you run the Audio Setup Wizard before enabling audio. Click the “Start the Audio Setup Wizard” button (See figure 35).

The Audio Setup Wizard window will appear. If you have multiple speakers plugged in to your computer, make sure the appropriate speakers are selected, then click the “OK” button (See figure 36).
Click the “Play” button to test your audio levels and follow the instruction in the recording (See figure 37).

![Audio Setup Wizard](image)

Figure 37: Clicking the Play button

If you were able to set your speakers to a comfortable audio level click the “Yes” button to set your speaker level (See figure 38).
Select the audio input device. If you have multiple microphones connected to your computer be certain that the right microphone is selected from the menu, then click the “OK” button (See figure 39).
Next, click the “Record” button and speak into the microphone while using the volume slider to set the appropriate audio level. After setting the audio lever appropriately click the “Stop” button (See figure 40).

Figure 40: Clicking the Record button to capture audio then clicking the Stop button

Next clicking the “Play” button and you will be able to tell if the audio was captured clearly (See figure 41).
The Microphone confirmation window will appear. If you can hear your audio clearly, click the “Yes” button. If the audio was not captured clearly, click the “No” button and repeat the steps mentioned above (See figure 42).

A message will appear confirming that you have configured your audio. Click the “OK” button.
Enabling Audio & Video

Enable audio by clicking the “Talk” button in the lower left hand corner of the AUDIO & VIDEO panel (See figure 43).

![Audio & Video Panel with Talk button highlighted](image)

Figure 43: Enabling Audio by clicking the Talk button

Enable video by clicking the “Video” button in the lower right hand corner of the Audio & Video panel (See figure 44).

![Audio & Video Panel with Video button highlighted](image)

Figure 44: Enabling Video by clicking the Video button
Participants panel

The Participants panel is where you’ll find a list of attendees in the session and their roles along with the features they have enabled. Faculty can provide feedback to attendees in this panel by clicking the show emotion icon. Mouse over the show emotion icon and review the types of emotion you can share with participants (See figure 45).

If an icon has been selected it will appear next to the Moderator’s name in the Participants panel. Emotions that have been selected will only appear next to the individual’s name for a few seconds (See figure 46).

To notify students that you have had to step away during a live session, click the “Step away from Session” button. To indicate that you have returned click the button again (See figure 47).
The PARTICIPANTS panel is also where you can view which tools have been enabled. You can disable tools for participants in this panel. Tools that have been enabled will appear with a red “X” next to the tools icon. You can manage audio, video, chat, Whiteboard, Application and Web Browsing permissions in this panel. To disable or enable a tool, click on the tools icon in the PARTICIPANTS panel.
CHAT Panel

The CHAT panel is where participants and attendees can text message. Click in the text field and enter in your message. After you have finished entering in your text, hit the Enter key on your keyboard (See figure 48).

Figure 48: Clicking the text field
WHITEBOARD Panel

The Whiteboard is the area where presenters can enter text, point to items of interest, insert screen shots, load PowerPoint presentations and load Web pages. The Whiteboard can have multiple pages; if you load a PowerPoint presentation that has 13 slides, Collaborate will load each slide on a separate page of the Whiteboard.

*Make sure that you have closed all PowerPoint windows and have exited the program prior to loading your PowerPoint presentation to a Collaborate Session.

To load a PowerPoint presentation, click the “Load Content” button in the upper right hand corner of the whiteboard menu (See figure 49).

Figure 49: Clicking the “Load Content” button

The Load Content window will appear. Navigate to the file you want to load and click on the file menu, then click the “Open” button (See figure 50).

Figure 50: Navigating to the file then clicking the “Open” button
Powepoint Converter will now load and convert the PowerPoint to slides. We suggested you load your PowerPoint presentation prior to the start time of your session.

The Page Explorer window will appear. You can navigate between slides either by clicking on the slides in the Page Explorer window or by clicking the “Next” or “Back” button (See figure 51).

![Page Explorer window](image)

Figure 51: Clicking the “Next” or “Back” button

Should the Page Explorer window close, you can reopen it at any time by clicking on the “Show Page Explorer” button (See figure 52).

![Show Page Explorer button](image)

Figure 52: Showing the Page Explorer option
Exiting a Session

To exit a Collaborate session click the “X” icon located in the upper right hand corner of the Collaborate menu (See figure 53).

![Figure 53: Clicking the “X” icon](image)

The Confirmation menu will appear asking “Do you really want to leave the session?” click the “OK” button.

*If you have any additional questions regarding Collaborate please contact University Technical Support at 973.443.UTAC (University Technical Assistance Center) or 973.443.8822. Prior to contact University Technical Support please have you 7 digit University I.D.. Your University I.D. is located on both your Faculty ID card and pay stub.