Activities: Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

The Blackboard Collaborate Ultra activity allows you to create a Webinar or virtual classroom for your students. The main Blackboard Collaborate tool is an interactive whiteboard; instructors may use the whiteboard to write on, upload PowerPoints, conduct polls and quizzes and use breakout rooms. Instructors may also have students view their desktop to view Word, Excel or Internet pages. Instructors are able to show themselves on camera and chat with the students via a chat area. The sessions may be recorded for asynchronous viewing and review.

Besides using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra as an online classroom, you can also use this tool for instructor office hours, where students may drop in virtually to ask questions, to conduct homework reviews, and to demonstrate how to complete assignments or work through course content.

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Accessing Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

1. Go to your Moodle course page.
2. Click on the Turn editing on button at the top right of the screen.
3. Click Add an activity or resource.
4. Click the radio button next to Blackboard Collaborate Ultra and click on the Add button (the icon should be a green puzzle piece).

   The Adding a new External Tool page will appear (Blackboard Ultra is an External Tool in Moodle).

5. Give the activity a name – NOTE: this isn't the name of your Ultra session, just the name given to the activity within Moodle.
6. In the Privacy section, uncheck 'Accept grades from the tool', so that your Blackboard Ultra activity does not show in your gradebook. No other settings need to be adjusted, so click the Save and return to course button.

   NOTE: you do NOT need to create separate Moodle activities if you have multiple Ultra sessions (ie. one for seminars and one for office hours). All activities created in a Moodle course page will point to the same Blackboard Collaborate Ultra sessions page. You can create separate sessions on this page.

Ultra Settings

1. Click on the Create Session button. A side menu will pop out from the right.
2. Type a Session name. The title of this session depends on whether you are opening a session for one class or the entire term. Make a title that will clearly communicate the session agenda to the students. Examples: Biology 20 A01 Daily Webinars (Weekdays at 10:00 am) or Biology 20 A01 Homework Help Online Class (Mondays 8:00 pm). Please include the class you are teaching in the title, so that this session will be easier for E&IT to locate in case of a disruption.
3. Set whether you will allow Collaborate guest access – this is useful if you are using Ultra for a conference webinar, for example. You can also set what kind of role the guest will receive upon logging into Collaborate (you can set guests to log in as a Participant, a Moderator, or a Presenter).

   Guest access

   Guest role | Guest link
   -----------|-------------
   Participant | https://ca.bbcollab.com

   Anonymous dial-in:
   571-392-7651 PIN: 137226623
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4. Set the time the **Session begins** and the **Session ends**. You can also set **Early Entry** options (useful if you have a separate session for each day).

   - If you are making one Collaborate session for the entire semester, adjust the timing to cover the duration of the course (e.g., January 6 to April 21). You also have the option of 'No end', which will keep your session continuous with no end.
   - If you are making Collaborate sessions to place within the modules, set the timing for the specific session. You can make this session a repeat session, which will give you options to set the session to repeat daily, weekly, or monthly.

5. The **Session Settings** option has a few useful settings to consider:

   - **Default Attendee Role:** Set what kind of role attendees will have when they enter the session (Participant, Moderator, Presenter)
   - **Allow recording downloads:** This allows students to download recordings.
   - **Anonymize chat messages:** This option strips the name and profile off of chat messages in the recording, making participants (including moderators) anonymous when the recording is viewed (this does not affect the live session).
   - **Show profile pictures for moderator only:** Participants will not be able to upload a profile picture. Moderators will still have this ability.
   - **Participants can share audio:** You can turn this off so only moderators can share audio.
   - **Participants can share video:** You can turn this off so students are not able to share video from their webcams.
   - **Participants can post chat messages:** This allows students to participate in the chat room by posting messages.
   - **Participants can draw on whiteboard and files:** This setting allows students to draw on the whiteboard and uploaded PowerPoints, photos, or PDFs.
   - **Allow attendees to join the session using a telephone:** On by default, this setting allows students to join by calling a phone number and entering a PIN. Information required is available by clicking on the ellipsis ‘three dots’ icon on the far right of the session link after clicking on the Blackboard Ultra activity in Moodle):

     ![Session Settings](image)

     - **Participants can only chat privately with moderators:** It is recommended you limit private chats to between student and moderators only.
     - **Moderators supervise all private chats:** Moderators will be able to see all private chats, including those between students (**highly recommended**).
Opening a Collaborate Session

Joining a Collaborate Session on Moodle

1. Click on the **Ultra** activity.

2. Click on the **Session link**. You will get a popup menu with two options: Join session, and Anonymous dial-in. **Click on Join session.**

3. Collaborate will start loading.

If this is your first time logging into a Collaborate session, you have the option to go through a quick tutorial on the features. You may skip this tutorial if you like.

**Session settings** – click this tab to access options for recording of the session, using your phone for audio, reporting issues to Blackboard, Help topics, access the tutorial again, and leaving the session.
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Audio and video setup

1. Every time you start BBC, make sure to configure your camera and microphone settings. To do this, click on the Open Collaborate menu tab (purple-coloured tab on the bottom right hand side of the page).

2. From the side panel that appears, select the Settings (gear) icon at the bottom of the panel that pops out.

3. Click on Set up your camera and microphone. If your camera or microphone do not work, try changing your input by using the dropdown menu and choosing another input option.

4. If the microphone or camera you are currently testing out is working, click the Yes – It’s working button.

5. When you are ready, click the Microphone and Video icons on the bottom of the page to share your audio and video with all participants.
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Using the Features of Blackboard Ultra

Record a Session/Retrieve a Recording:

1. On the top left hand side of the screen, click the black Open Session menu button.

2. The first option available to you is Start Recording. Click this option and the session will start recording. The Open Session menu tab will now have a small Recording icon beside it.

3. To stop recording, click on the Stop Recording option in the Open Session menu tab. 

   **Note:** To retrieve a previous recording, on the Sessions list screen, click on the hamburger menu (3 lines) on the top left hand side of the page. Then click on Recordings.

Chat with Participants

As a moderator, there are three ways you can chat with others currently logged into the same session. All three ways are available by clicking on the Open Collaborate panel tab (purple tab on bottom right).

1. **To chat with everyone:** Click on the Everyone option.

2. **To chat with moderators ONLY:** Click on the Moderators option

3. **To chat with an individual participant privately:** Click on the Participants icon at the bottom of the Collaborate panel. Click on the Participant controls button beside a participant’s name to access the Private Chat option with that participant.
Share Blank Whiteboard

Like previous versions of Blackboard Collaborate, Ultra has a whiteboard you can write on and interact with. To share a blank whiteboard, click on the Open Collaborate panel tab (purple tab) and select Share Content. Click on Share Blank Whiteboard.

NOTE: Unlike previous versions of Blackboard Collaborate, Ultra only has one whiteboard page. **You cannot create additional whiteboard pages.** A workaround is to include blank slides in your Powerpoint presentations. **Please note that annotations are not saved** on these slides, so if you navigate to a new slide, you will lose annotations on old slides.

Whiteboard Interaction Features:

- **Select tool:** select objects (eg. drawings, shapes) already on the whiteboard.
- **Pointer tool:** point at objects on the whiteboard.
- **Pencil tool:** draw on the whiteboard.
- **Shapes tool:** add shapes (rectangles, ellipses, lines) to the whiteboard.
- **Text tool:** add text to the whiteboard.
- **Clear tool:** clears the entire whiteboard.
- **Colors tool:** pick the colour used for the pencil (only appears when Pencil tool is selected).
View Controls:

**Show View Controls:** Show the options for viewing (eg. zoom in and out).

**Zoom in:** Zooms in on the content, making it appear larger.

**Zoom out:** Zooms out, making objects appear smaller.

**Best fit:** Finds the best size for the content, depending on the size of the browser window.

**Actual size:** resets the content back to its actual size.

To stop sharing the whiteboard: click on the **Stop Sharing** button (top right hand side of the screen).

Share Application

Like previous versions of Blackboard Collaborate, Ultra allows you to share applications (eg. a webpage, PowerPoint) or your desktop. To share your desktop or an application click on the **Open Collaborate panel** tab (purple tab) and select **Share Content**. Click on **Share Application**.

You will then be prompted to show your entire screen (desktop) or choose a specific application. Please note that you will need to have the application open in order to select it.

Share Screen:

If you choose the ‘Entire Screen’ option, you will be presented with a popup box where you can confirm that you would like to share your desktop. If you have two screens, you will be prompted to select one of two screens to share. Click **Share** when you are ready.
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When you are finished sharing your screen, click on the **Stop Sharing** button on the top right hand side of the screen.

**Share Application:**

If you choose the ‘Just an Application’ option, you will be presented with a popup box where you can choose the application you would like to share. The application must already be open in order to share it. Click on the application you would like to share, and click **Share**.

When you are finished sharing your screen, click on the **Stop Sharing** button on the top right hand side of the screen.
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Share Files

This option is similar to the ‘Load Content’ button on classic Blackboard Collaborate, where you could upload a PowerPoint to the whiteboard. To share a file, click on the **Open Collaborate panel** tab (purple tab) and click on **Share Content**. Click on **Share Files**.

A new panel will open, with a box at the top for adding files (**NOTE**: images, PowerPoints, and PDF files only). You can drag files into this box, or click on the box itself to navigate to where your files are located.

You can have several files added to your session. All files you’ve added will show in this panel. Click on a file and then click on the **Share Now** button on the bottom of the panel to share the file with participants and interact with it.

In sharing mode, if you are sharing a PowerPoint, all slides will be previewed in the panel on the right hand side of the screen. Click on a slide to show it to participants. You can also use the **arrow** buttons at the bottom of the currently presented slide to move to the next slide.
You will have the same tools for annotation that you do when you are using the Whiteboard function. **HOWEVER, your annotations will not be saved when you move to another slide.** If you move to another slide and then need to move back, you will lose your annotations on that slide.

To stop sharing your file, click on the **Stop Sharing** button on the top right hand side of the screen.

**Polling**

You can set up quick class polls in your session by using the Polling feature. To use this feature, click on the **Open Collaborate panel** tab (purple tab). Click on **Share Content**, and then click on **Polling**.

The Polling option will give you Yes/No choices, or 2-5 choices for a multiple choice type of question. Please note that you cannot add answers to these choices (the choices remain generic), so your questions will need to be made beforehand in a PowerPoint or other type of file to share with participants.
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Breakout Groups

You can set up breakout groups in your session for students to work together privately in groups, with their own whiteboard space. To use this feature, click on the Open Collaborate panel tab (purple tab). Click on Share Content, and then click on Breakout Groups.

With this feature, you can choose to assign participants to groups yourself (custom assignment), or allow Ultra to assign groups automatically. In this panel, you can also add and subtract breakout rooms as needed, and drag participants into these rooms. When you are ready, press Start (bottom of the panel) to move participants to their breakout rooms.
NOTE: If you are not in the same room as students, you will not be able to hear them (and they will not be able to hear you). If you would like to speak to students in a group, you will need to move yourself into that room.
Ultra Settings

If you are having difficulty with your webcam or your microphone, you can adjust these settings using the Settings panel. You can also use this panel to adjust notifications of activities (eg. chat room responses), and give permissions to participants so they can share audio and video as well. To go to your settings, click on the Open Collaborate panel tab (purple tab). Click on Share Content, and then click on Breakout Groups.

Set your status (Present, Away, etc.), or give feedback to the presenter (Faster, Slower, etc.). Clicking on the picture will allow you to upload a profile picture.

Set up your camera, microphone, or adjust audio settings

Set notifications for whenever a participant joins/leaves a session, posts a chat message, or raises their hand.

Set permissions for participants (sharing audio and video, posting in chat, drawing on the whiteboard)

For additional information, contact Moodle Help at moodle@norquest.ca