Collaborate Ultra (Chat)

Collaborate Ultra is a simple, convenient, real-time video conferencing tool that engages you with course instructors and other students. Everyone feels like they're in the same lecture hall together, regardless of their location or device.
1. Getting Started

There are two Collaboration tools in Blackboard. The tool used for your online sessions is **Blackboard Collaborate Ultra**.

2. Accessing Collaborate Ultra

There are number of ways to access your virtual sessions. This will depend on the nature of the course and the instructor’s preferences.
2.1 From the Course Menu

After accessing your course, some instructors will add a direct link to the sessions in the course menu.

- Notice that the title for the *Collaborate Ultra* page might be different, e.g. online lectures.

- If you can’t find a direct link from the course menu. Click on the *Tools* page in the course menu.
2.2 From the Tools page

1. From the course menu, click **Tools**.

2. Scroll the **Tools** page then select **Blackboard Collaborate Ultra**.

![Tools page screenshot](image.png)

2.3 Invite Link

Some instructors might send you a direct link of the session by email.

1. Check your university’s email account.

2. Click directly on the link. There are no access restrictions and no login is required.
3. Accessing your Sessions

After Accessing Blackboard Collaborate Ultra’s main page, all the sessions in the course appear.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blackboard Collaborate Ultra</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sessions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Room Locked</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blackboard Training Session - Collaborate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Test Session ... Jamal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blackboard Training Session 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCC0340 - UTH</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Pay attention to the **session type** located underneath each session’s title.

E.g. upcoming, in progress and finished (recorded session).

You can filter the list of sessions that appear by all upcoming sessions, all previous sessions, and sessions in a date range.
Click on an upcoming session to view its details.
If the session has started (in progress):

1. click on the session’s name to enter the virtual session.

Collaborate Ultra opens directly in your browser, so you don't have to install any software to join a session.
2. Click **Join Session** from the side menu.

- Each link is unique to an individual session and a user in that session. **This means that the link only works for you in that session.**

- If you don’t see the session, check with the course instructor to confirm the exact dates and timing.
The session starts in a new browser window.

If you are a first-time user:

Click **Start Tutorial** to view the quick interactive demo on how to use *Blackboard Collaborate Ultra* or Click **Later** to continue to the session.
3. The welcome screen appears.

- On some computers, you might need to allow the browser to access your microphone or video. Accept the changes in the browser and continue with the session.

- **Google chrome (versions 42+) is the recommended browser.** Refer to [Browser Checker](#) to double check your current browser.

- In case the session does not load - especially in Chrome, it is likely related to disabled cookies. **Ensure cookies are enabled in the browser to launch the session.**
3.1 Set Up to Use your Audio and Video

To test or setup your audio or video setting:

1. Click **Open Collaborate Panel** located at the right end of the screen.
2. Click **Set up your camera and microphone** to make any necessary adjustments.
3. Click Yes- it’s working when you’re done.

3.2 Sessions Guide

The quick interactive demo on how to use Blackboard Collaborate Ultra can be accessed anytime from the Session Menu located at the top left of the screen.
The main components in *Collaborate Ultra* are shown in the following guide:

Main Components of Collaborate Ultra - (University Center for Teaching and Learning, 2020)
3.3 Session Areas

The session room is organized into three convenient areas: a media space, the Session menu, and a Collaborate panel. This guide focuses on two areas, the content presentation area and the collaborate panel.

3.3.1 Content presentation area

This area is also known as the media space, or main stage. It is where the content of the session is displayed.
If there is no shared content, you’ll see the participants profiles in a grid view.

Presentation area with attendee profiles. No shared content

- You can switch between the grid view and follow the speaker view.
Collaborate Ultra switches to follow-the-speaker view automatically when there are more than five attendees.

3.3.2 Content Presentation Tools

Tools that appear in the presentation area relate directly to what is happening in the session.
During the session:

- Click the **microphone** icon to talk and engage with the other participants.
- Click the **Hand rise** icon to get the attention of your instructor or the session’s moderator.
- The **camera** icon can be used to share your computer’s screen.

- Tools availability is dependent on the permissions the instructors set.
- E.g. The moderator can turn the microphones off during the entire session or allow audio discussions only in the last 20 minutes of the session.
- Confirm with your instructor which tools you can use during the session.

**Blackboard Resources**

**Areas and Tools Description in Collaborate Ultra**
3.3.3 Collaborate panel

This panel takes your session experience to the next level. It is the space to engage with other attendees using all the great collaborate tools.

- Posting chat messages during the session and private chats are dependent on your instructor’s permissions. Even drawing on the tool’s whiteboard and shared files.
- Confirm with your instructor which tools you can use during the session.
For more information about the tools in the Collaborate panel, check the following resource.

**Blackboard Resources**

**Collaborate Panel Tools**

4. Exiting your sessions

When you wish to end the session, Click on **Leave Session**. It can be accessed from two locations.
5. Viewing Recorded Sessions

Previous sessions are recorded and saved for later viewing. To watch a missed or recorded session, go the **recordings** page.

1. Go to *Collaborate Ultra* page inside a course. This page can be accessed from several locations as explained above.

![From course menu or Tools page](image)

Only moderators can turn recording on in sessions.
2. In *Collaborate Ultra* page click the menu icon, then select **recordings**.

3. Click a recording tile, then select **watch now**. The session starts loading in a new tab.
4. Click the **play** icon or press the **space bar**.

5. Use the Playback controls to navigate through the recording.
Everyone can view the recordings from any device as often as they want. There are no view limits.

You also may be able to download recordings. However, instructors must allow recording downloads for each session.

6. Downloading Recorded Sessions

1. From the recordings page, click recording options then select Download.

2. Alternatively, while viewing a recorded session, open the recording menu in the player and select Download Recording.
Recorded sessions are compressed and saved as MP4s. Recordings may also include the activities in the live session.

You can also download a transcript for the captions from the Recording menu. Other items might be able to download depending on the instructor’s selected options.
Frequently check the sessions page in Collaborate Ultra to review any updates or changes in the live sessions schedule. For any enquiries about the schedule, contact the course instructor(s).

**Blackboard Resources**

- Collaborate Ultra for Participants (Blackboard)
- Blackboard Ultra: Participant Overview (LINGOs Global)
- Collaborate Ultra for Participants (Blackboard)
- Get Started
- Assistance for Participants
- Troubleshooting

**Images References**


*University Center for Teaching and Learning - Faculty Knowledge Base, (2020), Main Components of Collaborate Ultra [ONLINE]. Available at: https://www.etskb-fac.cidde.pitt.edu/blackboard/getting-started-in-collaborate/ [Accessed 9 March 2020].*