Student Guide to Blackboard Collaborate

Contents

Getting started

Equipment
To participate fully in Collaborate sessions you require

- A laptop or desktop.
- Google chrome.
- Speakers usually these will be built into your laptop, if not you can dial into the webinar session using your telephone.
- Microphone usually these will be built into your laptop, if not you can dial into the webinar session using your telephone, or purchase an external microphone.
- Camera usually these will be built into your laptop, if not you can purchase a webcam.
- Software recommendations for students who require an accessible experience can be found here https://help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/Ultra/Participant/Accessibility

Access
To access the Collaborate session:
- Go to your module site on Blackboard.
- Click the link to 'Blackboard Collaborate Ultra' on the main menu (right hand side)
- A page opens showing all the Collaborate sessions scheduled for your module.
- Click on the session you want to join and click 'Join session' in the resulting pop up.

If for whatever reason you are unable to access audio on your laptop you can use the dial in option to listen to the webinar. The number you need to dial is displayed when you click on the session you want to join.

If you are encountering technical difficulties please check you are using the recommended equipment listed above. Mobile devices and browsers other than Chrome will give you limited functionality.

Using Collaborate to attend lectures

Your lecturers role

Your lecturer will moderate the session. Moderators have full control over the session and its settings. They can:

- share content on the main screen
- record the sessions
- see hand raise notifications, chat with any attendee in a private channel and lower hands
- decide what participants have permission to do including permissions for sharing audio and video, chatting, and drawing on the whiteboard or shared files
- promote attendees to other roles such as presenter or a moderator
- remove attendees from a session

Your role

During lectures you will usually have the role of 'participant'. Usually you will be able to do the following things:

- chat in the 'Everyone' chat channel. Note that if a session is being recorded, chat messages in the 'Everyone' channel are being recorded as well.
- raise your hand to signal to the moderator that you need help and talk to the moderator in a private chat
- change your personal notification settings. These notify you when someone joins or leaves the session, or posts a chat message.
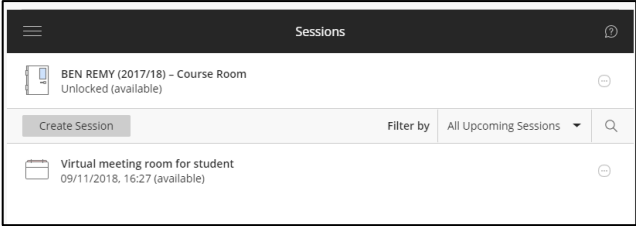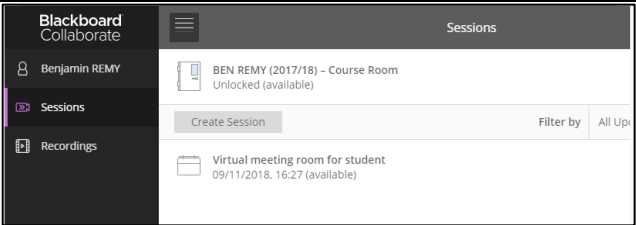
Vote in polls

The moderator can run polls. After a moderator starts a poll the choices pop up and then disappear. Select Polling to open the choices again. Select your choice. The moderator gets a full breakdown of who has voted and how and they may choose to show you the overall responses in an anonymous form.

Work in breakout groups

The moderator can create 'breakout groups' during the lecture. These are like private side rooms where you can work together for a short time before you have to rejoin the main room. The lecturer can enter the breakout room at any time to supervise. Note that none of the information in the breakout session is recorded, so if you want to keep your work you need to take notes or a take a screenshot before the breakout groups are closed. Your lecturer should warn you before they close the groups. When you are in a breakout group you will have presenter permissions meaning you can share video, audio and files on screen. You can learn more about this in the section titled 'Using Collaborate for group work or presentations'.
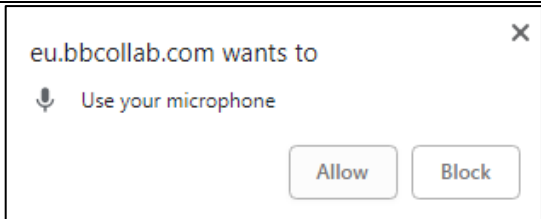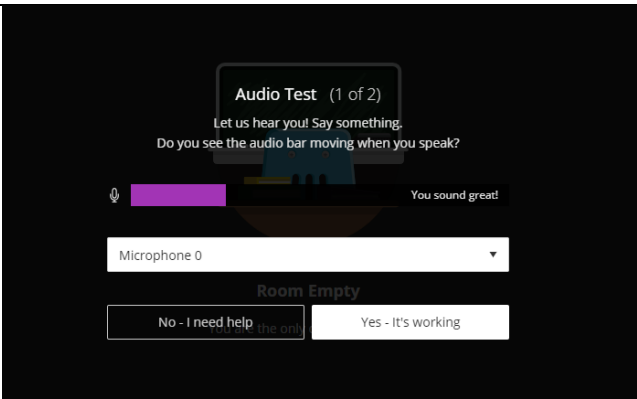
Video recordings

Your lecturer can record sessions for you to view later. All shared activity that occurs in the main room is recorded.

1.	To access the recordings go to Collaborate via the link on the main menu of your module site.	
2.	In the session page click on the burger menu (The three horizontal dashes on the top left)	
3.	This opens a new menu on the left hand side. Select 'recordings'	
4.	All the recordings available to view are listed here. The recordings are processed and made available automatically. It takes at least twice the length of the session for the recording to be produced. So if the lecture lasted for one hour the video may appear after about two hours.	
5.	Click on the one you want to watch and then click on 'watch now'.	
6.	The recording opens in a collaborate player. Click on the collaborate panel (bottom right) to view the chat channel.	
Note	Videos may take up to 24 hours to be fully processed. During this time you may still view it but you may notice image and sound quality issues and the absence of some content e.g. the chat channel may be missing.	

Using Collaborate for group work or presentations

There will be times when you will have a presenter role. Presenters can contribute to the content that is being shared on the main screen including the files being shared and video and audio.

Setting up audio and video

1.	When you are able to use the video and audio during a Collaborate session Google Chrome will automatically send you a notification asking to use your microphone and camera. Choose 'allow'.	
2.	Collaborate will show you output from the cameras it detects. Select the camera you want to use. Select Yes, it's working to proceed.	
3.	Collaborate will show you the audio output levels from the microphone it detects. Speak and check that the level changes adequately in response to your voice. Select Yes, it's working to proceed.	
4.	By default, your video is hidden and you are muted after you complete the setup. To begin sharing your video and audio you need to select the microphone and camera icons. You can toggle them on or off at any time during the session	Audio icon Video icon

You can also set up your audio and video at any time in 'My Settings'.

If you do not have speakers or a microphone you can use the dial in as an alternative. This will allow you to speak and to listen through your telephone during the session. The dial in number is displayed in a pop up when you first join the session and can be accessed at any time once you're in the session from the 'Session menu' in the top left hand corner.

Using video and audio (at the same time as everyone else)

There are two different modes you can use when there are a number of people sharing audio and video at the same time.
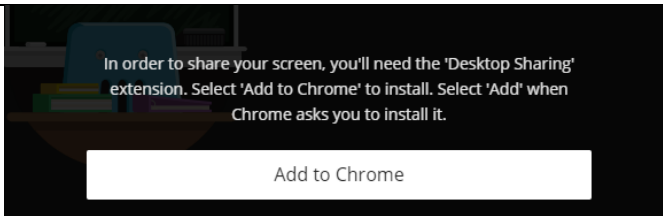
Follow the speaker view
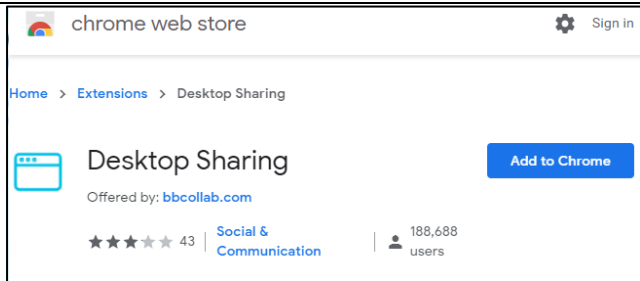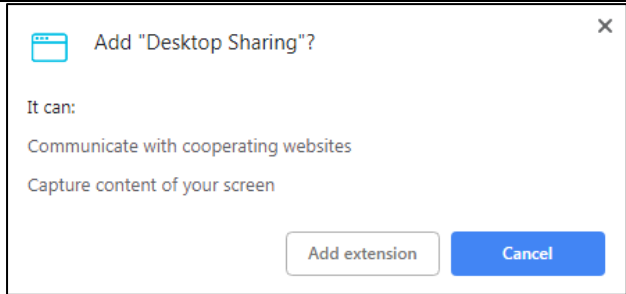
1.	To use 'follow the speaker mode' click on the icon	follow the speaker icon
2.	This detects who is speaking and shares the speaker's video most prominently on the screen.	
	Note that this mode works best when you take turns speaking. There is often a short lag meaning it can switch to someone once they have finished speaking.	
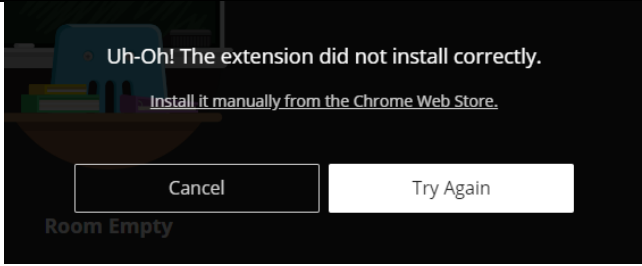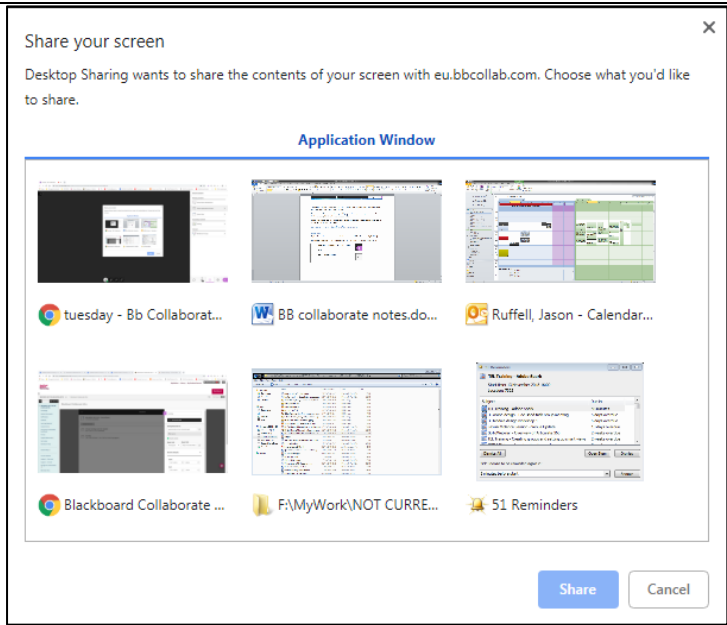
Grid view
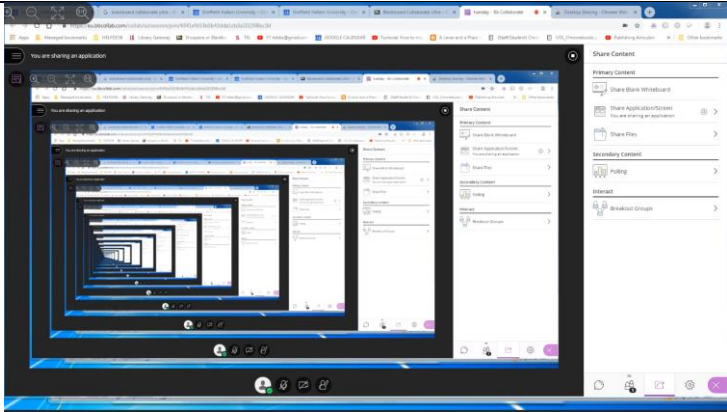
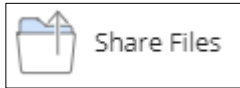| 1.	To use the 'grid view' click on the icon	Grid view icon
2.	This shows everyone's video at once in a grid.	
	Note that this only works with five or fewer participants. If there are any more it will automatically switch to follow the speaker mode.	

Sharing an application or your screen
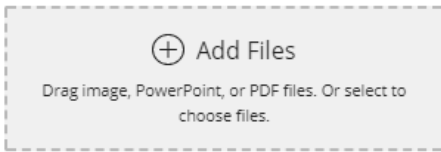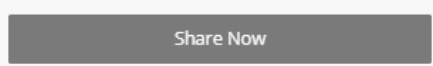
You can share your screen so that you can share websites or applications

1.	First open the application you want to share or open the website you want to share in a new tab	
1.	Open the Collaborate Panel (bottom right)	
2.	Select 'Share Content'	
3.	Select 'Share Application/Screen'	Share Application/Screen
4.	The first time you try to share your screen/an application. Google Chrome will ask you to install an extension called 'Desktop Sharing'. Select 'Add to Chrome'.	In order to share your screen, you'll need the 'Desktop Sharing' extension. Select 'Add to Chrome' to install. Select 'Add' when Chrome asks you to install it. Add to Chrome
5.	It will take you to the Google app store click 'Add to Chrome'	chrome web store Sign in Home > Extensions > Desktop Sharing Desktop Sharing Add to Chrome Offered by: bbcollab.com ★★★★★ 43 Social & Communication 188,688 users
6.	Click 'Add extension'	Add "Desktop Sharing"? It can: Communicate with cooperating websites Capture content of your screen Add extension Cancel

7.	Click on the Collaborate tab. Often you will get the following error message. You can ignore this by clicking 'Cancel'.	
8.	Select 'Share Application/Screen' again and it should work	
9.	Choose whether you want to share your desktop screen or an application	
10. Note	If you choose to share an application. You will be prompted to select one from those you have open. Then click 'share'. Sometimes the screen you want to share does not appear as an option. This usually happens because of lag. To avoid this make sure you open the screen or application a couple of minutes before you attempt to share it.	
Note	When you start sharing you will often get an infinity screen of Collaborate. Don't worry about this it is not an error. You can make this go away by navigating to the tab you want to share.	

Sharing files

You can upload and share files (under 60MB per file and 125MB for multiple files) including images (GIF, JPEG or PNG), PDF files and Powerpoint presentations.

1.	Open the Collaborate Panel (bottom right)	
2.	Select 'Share Content'	
3.	Select 'Share Files'	Share Files
4.	Select 'Add Files Here' or drag a file into the box to upload it.	⊕ Add Files — Drag image, PowerPoint, or PDF files. Or select to choose files.
5.	Select 'Share Now' when you're ready for others to see the file	Share Now

Sharing a whiteboard

1.	Open the Collaborate Panel (bottom right)	
2.	Select 'Share Content'	
3.	Select 'Share Blank Whiteboard'	Share Blank Whiteboard
4.	Draw or just jot down notes	

Etiquette

Running and participating in webinars is a valuable skill that you will be using in your workplace. These are best practices you should try to follow:

- **Join the session early.** You can and should join the Collaborate sessions when the 'doors open' so you have time to set up and resolve any technical difficulties you might encounter. You will usually be able to join the session 15 minutes ahead of the scheduled start time.
- **Be professional.** Remember you are face-to-face with your peers, instructors, and guest experts. Make a good impression and participate. Don't talk over anyone else. Raise your hand if there is no opening to speak. Type questions and feedback in the chat. Watch your mannerisms and facial expressions. Pick a professional profile picture if you have the option of having one.
- **Introduce yourself when speaking.** Don't assume everyone automatically recognizes your voice. State your name the first few times you speak.
- **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.
- **Hide your video when not giving your full attention.** If you are sharing video and you need to multi-task during the session, shut your video off to avoid looking distracted.
- **Tidy up your desktop.** If you are sharing your screen your desktop will be seen by participants in the session and in any recordings that are made. Make sure you don't share more than you intended.