eCampus Training

Basic

BLACKBOARD COLLABORATE

# ULTRA BASICS

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Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Overview

Blackboard Collaborate is a web conferencing tool that allows instructors and students to interact in a synchronous media-rich environment. Instructors can set up a Collaborate session and engage students as if they were in a traditional classroom using functionalities such as two-way audio, multi-point video, interactive whiteboards, application sharing, rich media, breakout rooms, and session recording.
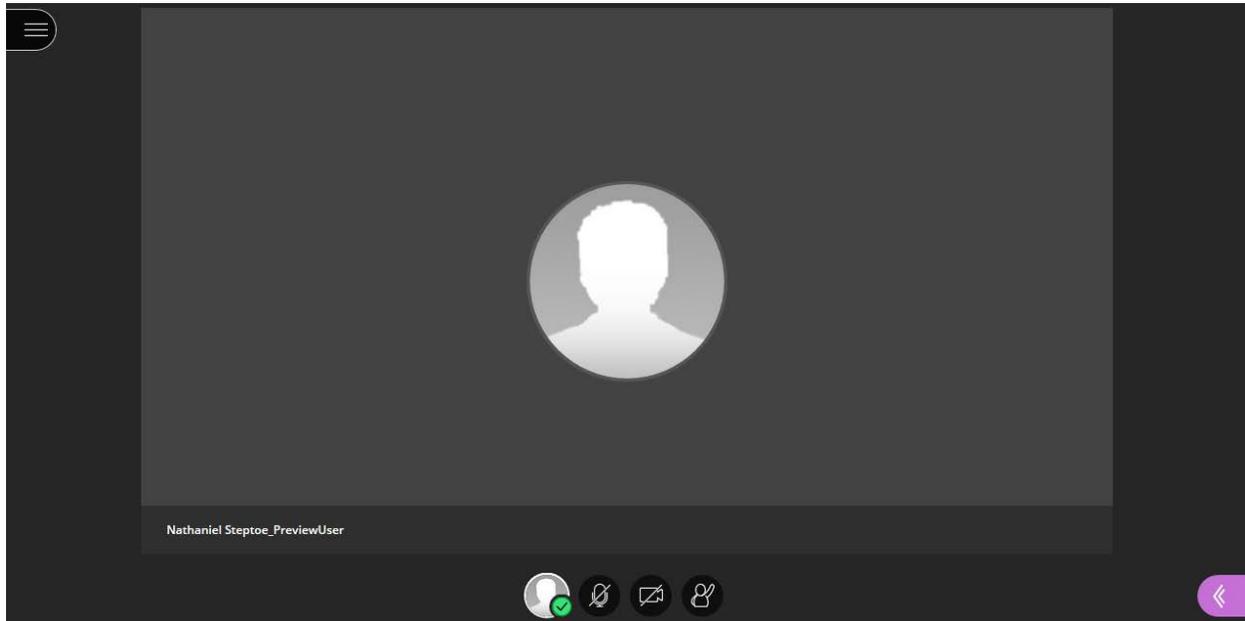
Bb Collaborate Terms and Technical Requirements

Moderator – Moderators have access to all Blackboard Collaborate features, including the ability to grant moderator status to participants. The person conducting a session, such as an instructor, is a Moderator.

Participant – Participants have restricted access to Blackboard Collaborate features. Students are usually participants, although moderators can grant participants moderator status.

Technical Suggestions

Blackboard Collaborate with the Ultra experience is based on modern web technologies including HTML 5 and WebRTC. You don't need to install Java or a launcher.

Note: If a screen reader is needed, For the best Blackboard Collaborate experience with your screen reader, use Firefox and Jaws on a Windows system. On a Mac use Safari and VoiceOver.

While Collaborate supports all browsers, Chrome or Firefox (versions 49 and up) gives you the best experience. For a list of supported browsers and the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra tools compatibility with the browsers, please see the chart below.

Browser	Audio/Video	Application Sharing
Chrome™ versions 54+ On Windows® and Mac®	Supported with High Quality Shows most videos in conference layout	Share and View
Firefox® versions 49+ On Windows, Mac, and Linux®	See two videos: the speaker and your own	Share and View
Firefox® On Windows, Mac, and Linux® With Flash® versions 17+	See two videos: the speaker and your own	View Only
Safari® With Flash versions 17+	See two videos: the speaker and your own	View Only
Internet Explorer® With Flash versions 17+ IE 10 is not supported. To learn more see the Behind the Blackboard IE 10 in Collaborate Ultra article. (available in English only)	See two videos: the speaker and your own	View Only
Microsoft Edge® With Flash versions 17+	See two videos: the speaker and your own	View Only

Mobile devices

Browsers on mobile devices are supported on Windows touch devices such as the Surface at this time. Users can choose to use either the Bb Student mobile app or the device browser.

What's New with Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

With this new version of Collaborate, Blackboard focused on supporting a more web friendly experience in Firefox (Using WebRTC, a free open project that provides browsers and mobile applications with Real-Time Communications (RTC) capabilities via simple APIs.), increasing session sizes, and updating the recording player.

Firefox Update

The WebRTC experience in Firefox provides an almost identical experience with Chrome. This means moderators can now do the following on their Firefox browsers.

- Share applications
- Share their desktop
- View two videos at one time
- View videos in both grid and follow-the-speaker views

Increased Session Size

You can now host sessions that have up to 250 participants attending.

New recording player

The recording player now has the same look and feel as your Collaborate session. We've updated the interface to make it easier to use and more accessible.

- There is a Recording menu similar to the Session menu in your live sessions. From here you can download the full recording, get extra help or report an issue if you are having trouble with the recording.
- Closed captions play with the recording.
- Playback controls are intuitive and include access to captions, if they are available.

Visual Updates

Blackboard have also included a few new visual updates with the new Collaborate Ultra Experience.

- We changed the hand raise icon to use an image that represents all cultures in our global community.
- We updated the image displayed when you are the only person in the room. It is now more responsive.
- We've given the Present/Away icon better color contrast so it is more accessible.
- We've made the Scheduler calendar control easier to use. It now automatically sets the end date to the selected start date.
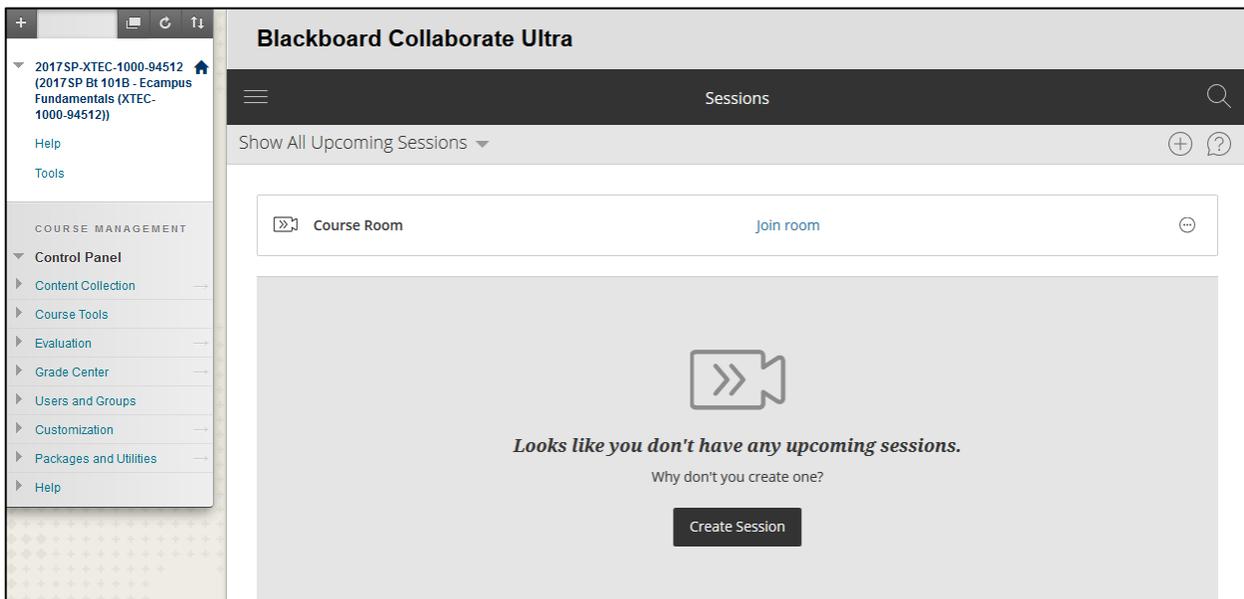
Schedule a Session

To schedule a session:

1. Log in to eCampus. Select one of your courses or organizations.
2. From the Course menu, select the Tools link.
3. Select Blackboard Collaborate Ultra.
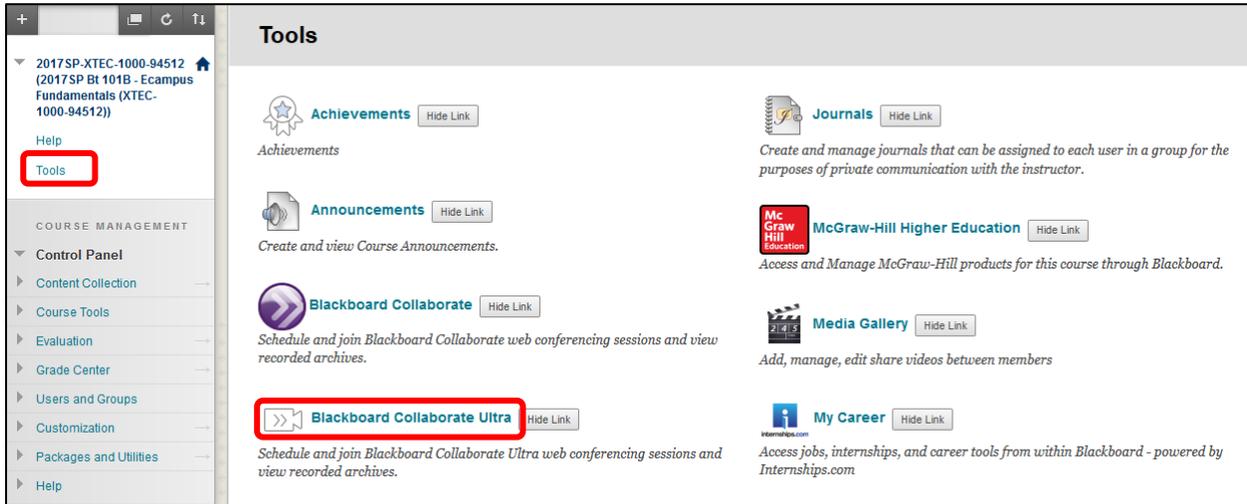
Note: Faculty can access Blackboard Collaborate Ultra from any Content Area, the Tools link located on the Course menu, and by going through the Control Panel and clicking on Course Tools.

When you first access Blackboard Collaborate Ultra from your course you'll encounter an intuitive design for scheduling sessions in the Ultra experience and viewing recordings.

Blackboard Collaborate Ultra List

On the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra List Page you can do the following:

1. Access the Blackboard Collaborate menu (allows you to view Session or Recordings)
2. View Scheduled Sessions, Previous Sessions, and Show Sessions in Range
3. Join Course Room Session
4. Search for sessions
5. Create a new Session
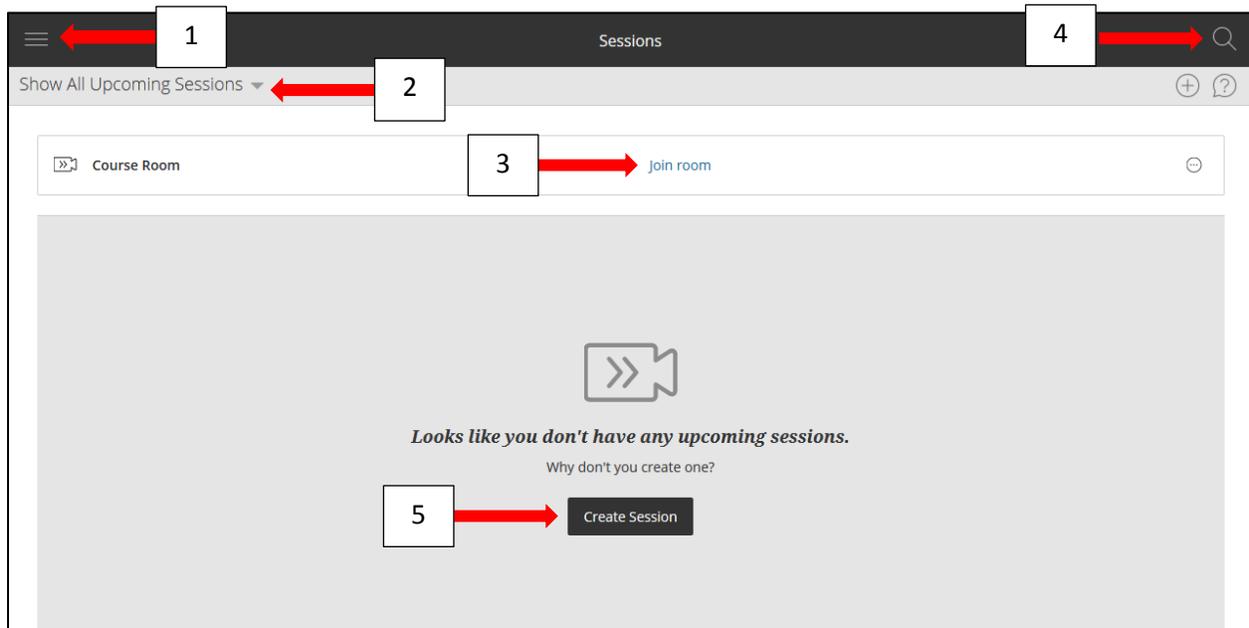
To create a new session, select the **Create Session** button (see #5 in the figure above).

Create Session Options

1. Enter a name for your new session.
2. Set the date and time the session starts and ends. You can choose to keep a session open or repeat. You can also select if students can enter the session prior to the start time (15 minutes up to an hour early entry).
3. Type a detailed description of the meeting. This helps students find the right session.
4. Set guest access for the meeting. Select On to allow participants to invite additional guests.
5. Decide if guests join as a participant, presenter, or moderator. Not sure of which permissions to grant someone? Don't worry. Permissions can also be set during your meeting.
6. You can send the copy of the guest link to your students, or other guests. You can also decide if your guests join as participants, presenters, or moderators by default.

Note: Session links can be long and break when sent. Use a URL shortening service, such as http://tinyurl.com, to create a short alias for your session.

Session settings

Decide who can do what in your sessions.

1. Allow recording downloads from the Recordings page as well as on the recording play back page.
2. Show the profile pictures of moderators only.
3. Allow participants to use audio, video, chat, and the whiteboard editing tools.
4. Allow users to join the session using a telephone for their audio.
5. Click the **Save** button.

The new created meeting room will show up on the page. For faculty and student to access the meeting room or recordings, they just need to go to the content area where the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra tool link located and click on the tool link which will open up the page with the meeting room access link.

Note: On the same page, click the upper left-hand **Menu** button and select the **Recordings** button on the left menu bar to access recorded sessions.

Attending a Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session

Blackboard Collaborate Ultra sessions are hosted in your browser. It's recommend that you use Mozilla Firefox versions 49+ or Google Chrome for the best experience.

Once you log into your Collaborate Ultra session, use the icons at the bottom to interact with other participants.
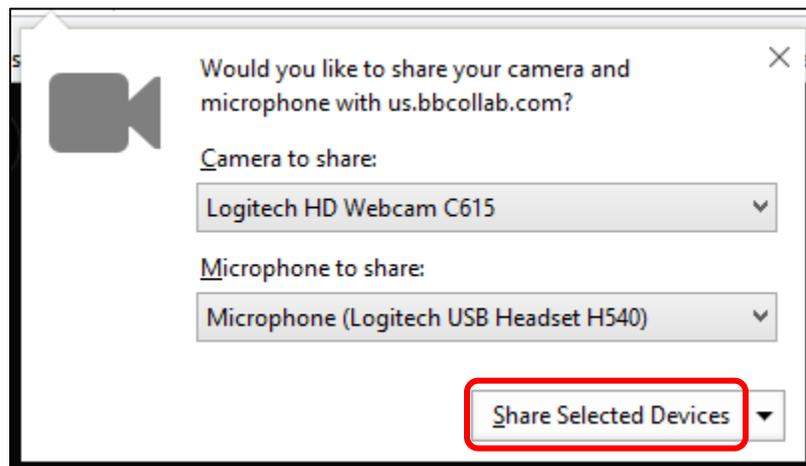
Audio and Camera setup

Audio: For optimal sound quality, we strongly recommend that you use a headset with a built-in microphone. If you do not have a headset, you can use regular headphones or earbuds as long as you have a separate microphone connected to your computer.

Camera: To use the video function in **Collaborate Ultra**, you must have a webcam connected to your computer. Otherwise, you will not be seen by other participants.

1. Select the Microphone icon.

2. Select the available connected microphone and Camera options.

   Would you like to share your camera and microphone with us.bbcollab.com?

   Camera to share:

   Logitech HD Webcam C615

   Microphone to share:

   Microphone (Logitech USB Headset H540)

3. Select the Share Selected Devices button to confirm.
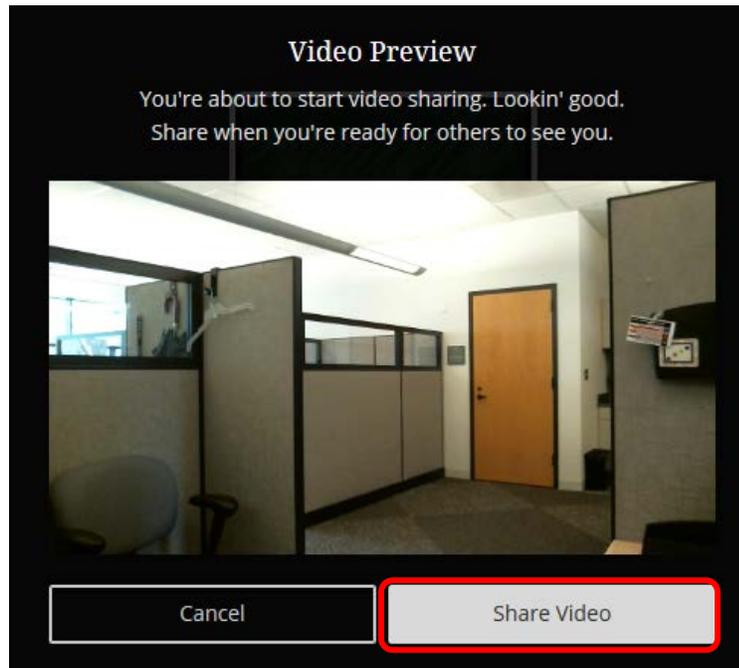
   Share Selected Devices

Once you complete the audio and camera setup, if your using Firefox, you will see the icon to the left appear at the top of your browser window. With Chrome the icon does not appear.

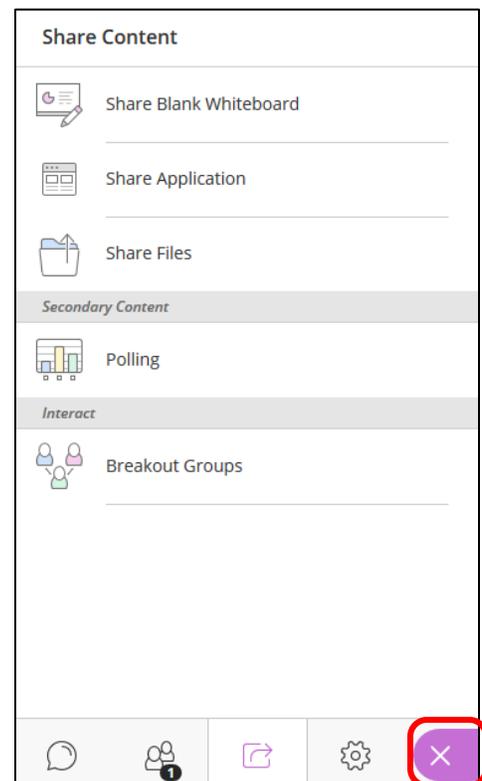If you desire to use your camera, select the Share video icon.

A **Video Preview** window will appear. When you're ready for others to see you, select the **Share Video** button.

Using Chat

To use the Chat feature,

1. Open the Collaborate panel and

2. Select the Chat icon to start chatting.
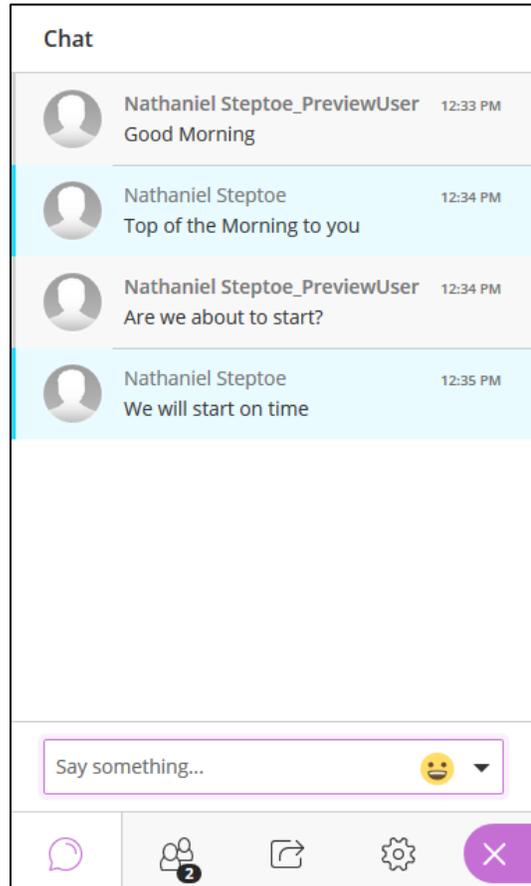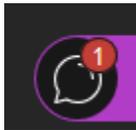
Chat Notifications

You are now able to chat with your students, participants, and other moderators.

Collaborate uses notifications that appear on your screen to let you know what's happening in your course. These notifications tell you when there are new chat comments.

Figure 1

Figure 2

The notification stays on the screen for a few seconds then disappears. It tells you if you have a new chat message, if there are more than one, and what chat channel the comment is in.

If you have the chat panel open, you'll also see a new comment alert in the **Chat** with: menu.

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