Ultra is Blackboard Collaborate’s new platform, which introduces a significant change. Gone is the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher, as sessions now take place in browser making access for both moderators and students far more streamlined.

**Accessing a Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session**

Moderators and all session participants must use Google Chrome as their web browser when using Ultra. Before joining your session, be sure to install it. Google Chrome Can be downloaded for free at [google.com/chrome](http://google.com/chrome)

To access your session, follow the **Moderator** link provided to you by your session administrator. The session will launch in a new tab in your browser and you will automatically join it as Moderator.

**Navigation**

In Ultra, Navigation is broken down into three menu areas: the **Session Menu**, the **Collaborate Panel** and the **Interaction Bar**. All video and content is displayed in the **Content Area**. You can set the view to follow the active participant, or display up to five video streams by clicking on the **Video View** button.

**Session Menu**

The **Session Menu** is found at the top-right corner of the window during the session. Click on the button with the three horizontal lines to open the menu.

The following features are located here:

- Start and stop recording the session
- Blackboard Collaborate’s help guides and an introduction to the Ultra interface

**Collaborate Panel**

The **Collaborate Panel** is located at the bottom-right corner of the window during the session, it can be accessed by clicking on this icon:
The following features are located here:

- Chat
- The Participants list
- Share Content
- My Settings

**Interaction Bar**
The **Interaction Bar** is found in the bottom of the main page window of the session, and features several buttons:

These can be used to:

- Set your status as away
- Mute or enable your microphone
- Enable or disable your camera
- Raise your hand in the session

**Setting Up**

**Recording a Session**

Recording a session allows you to share session content with students that were unable to participate in the active session, follow these steps to record your session:

- Open the **Session Menu**
- Click **Start Recording**
  - You will receive a notification stating: “Session is being recorded”
  - While session recording is ongoing this icon will appear at the top-left of the page:
- When you have finished your session, return to the **Session Menu** and click **Stop Recording**
  - **Note:** Each time a recording is started and stopped it will generate a unique recording file.
- You will receive a notification: “Recording has stopped”
- Your session administrator will share the recording with course participants – there is no accessible table of course recordings in Ultra

**Configuring audio/video**
The first time you log into a Blackboard Collaborate Ultra session, you will be prompted to configure your audio and video settings. During the session you can allow or disallow your microphone and camera using the **Interaction Bar**. You can change your audio and video settings:

- In the **Collaborate Panel** menu
  - Select the **My Settings** option
  - Access to AV Settings including camera/microphone setup and volume for both the microphone and the speakers
Using BlackBoard Collaborate Ultra

Open the **Collaborate Panel** to access Chat, the **Participants list**, the **Share Content** tab, and to create **Breakout groups**

**Chat**

Use the **Chat** function to send instant text to the users within the session.

![Chat interface](image)

After Accessing the **Collaborate Panel** select **Chat** by clicking on the chat bubble icon and use text box to send messages to session participants.

- Use the emoji drop-down menu to send an emoji
- Moderators have the ability to chat with *just* the other moderators in the session by using the “Chat with” menu at the top of the Chat window
- When in breakout rooms participants have ability to chat within their “room” or with the entire session by using the “Chat with” menu at the top of the Chat window
- Aside from the above, there is no private messaging within Ultra

**Note:** Chat within the session in not included in a session’s recording.

**Participants**

In the **Participants** window you can view all participants currently in the session, check their internet connection and see who has raised their hand (and in what order).

After Accessing the Collaborate Panel select “Open Participants List” by clicking on the icon:

The Participant’s list allows the moderator to:

- View the participants in the session and check the quality of their connection to the session
- See what participants have “Raised their hand” and determine the order they have done so
- Click the button with three dots to:
  - Assign the Moderator or Presenter roles to session participants
  - Assign users the captioner role
  - See the Permissions section below for information on the roles the moderator can assign to session participants
  - Remove a participant from the session
Share Content

Use the Share Content tab in the Collaborate Panel to interact with session participants by:

- using the whiteboard to write and draw
- sharing your screen and applications
- uploading and sharing files such as PDFs and PowerPoints

This tab also allows the moderator to create breakout groups and administer polls.

Using the Whiteboard

Share the Whiteboard with the session as way to create an interactive environment. There are several tools available for your use, including the ability to add Text or shapes. The toolbar is found at the top-right of the window. These tools remain available when sharing files (see below) such as PowerPoints and PDFs.

- Open the Collaborate Panel and select Share Content, followed by Share Blank Whiteboard
- Click the Stop at the top-right corner of the window button to end application sharing
Sharing your Screen and Applications

Use this tool to share your screen with the session – this can be limited to a particular application (such as a browser window or MS Word) or your entire screen.

This tool requires a free Google Chrome plug-in from the browser app store, you will be prompted to install it the first time you attempt to share your screen.

Open the Collaborate Panel and select **Share Content**, followed by **Share Application**

- Select the content you would like to share and click on it, it will then be displayed to the session participants.
- Click the **Stop** at the top-right corner of the window button to end application sharing.

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![Share Content](image1.png)

![Share Application](image2.png)
Sharing Files

This function allows you to upload files to share with the session. These can be images, PowerPoints or PDFs. Ultra converts the files to images and loads them onto the whiteboard for sharing.

Access the Collaborate Panel and select Share Content, choose Share Files. Add files to share by:

- Drag and drop the required file in to the box, or
- click on the “Add Files Here” box to launch the Windows Explorer or Finder

Once the file has been added to the session, click “Share Now” to share with the participants of the session, or member of your breakout group (see below).

- Use the navigation buttons at the bottom of the screen to move between PowerPoint slides
- When you have finished sharing the file, click the Stop button at the top-right of the window to end file sharing
- Files that have been added to the session remain in the Share Files area, and can be removed by clicking the trash can icon

Conducting Polls

Create simple polls as a way to interact with session members. To start a poll, access the Collaborate Panel and select Share Content, choose Polling.

Polls can have just “Yes” or “No” as options or follow a multiple choice format. Once you have selected the type of poll you would like, click Start.

- Follow responses and/or add your response in the window at bottom of the screen, you can see if a poll is active from the Poll icon in the Interaction Bar.
- Click the Stop button at the top-right of the polling window to stop the poll.
Using Breakout Groups

Create breakout groups for participants within the session by accessing the **Collaborate Panel**, selecting **Share Content** and then choosing **Breakout Groups**.

Follow these steps:

- Click the plus icon to add a new group
- Click the trash icon to delete a group
- Select Random assignment or Custom Assignment
  - Random assignment will evenly distribute participants among the available groups
- Drag and drop user names from the main room to the appropriate group
- Click **Start** to begin breakouts
  - When in the breakout groups users can chat with the group or with everyone in the session
  - When in breakout groups participants are able to share files, use the whiteboard, and share applications as the moderator is in the main room
  - Breakout groups are not included in session recordings

Permissions

By accessing the **Collaborate Panel** followed by the **Participants List** you are able to control the permissions within the session for each user. These permissions are assigned based on the following roles:

- **Make moderator**
  - This role grants the user the same privileges as the session moderator, including session recording and the ability to assign roles to users
- **Make presenter**
  - Allow the user to take control of the presentation tools for the session
    - Includes: file sharing and ability to upload a PowerPoint presentation
    - Control of the whiteboard
    - Application sharing (with Chrome plug-in mentioned above)
- **Make captioner**
  - Ultra gives the moderator the ability to assign captioning duties to a user during the session
  - This grants the captioner the ability to add closed-caption style text to the session in order to assist those who are hearing impaired
- **Remove from session**
  - Allows the Moderator to remove a user from the session