

Transitioning Teaching Online

Blackboard Collaborate Ultra



Blackboard Collaborate Ultra is a web-conferencing platform that we can use a virtual classroom environment for online learning. It is fully browser based to support up to 250 students.

Top 10 tips for using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

1. Plan your session using a seminar planner that fosters active learning, a high value learning experience for students and achievement of learning outcomes
2. Use the latest version of Chrome as your browser
3. Open session 15 minutes prior so students (and you) can test technology
4. Upload slides prior to the session, with first slide including the following details:
 - a. Unit code
 - b. Topic/Week
 - c. Day/Time of session
 - d. Facilitator name
 - e. Note for students to test their audio/video, where to go for help
5. Start by showing your video to create social/educator presence, but then turn video off to reduce bandwidth
6. Be explicit about the objectives and plan for the seminar (eg. learning objectives, protocol for using chat, you will be working in breakout rooms and need to come back with X completed etc.)
7. Ease into it, use 1-2 software functions until you and your students are comfortable
8. Encourage use of emojis and informal language to develop a sense of community
9. Make the first polling question risk-free/non-controversial to encourage participation
10. Ask a colleague or support staff member to assist with your first time

Getting started with Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Step 1: Creating a session within CloudDeakin

- a) Your faculty support team will assist you with setting up a session or this may have been already done for you. There are a number of settings that need to be selected during set up so please contact your faculty to ensure this is done correctly.
 - SEBE: sebe-clouddeakinsupport@deakin.edu.au
 - Health: hedu@deakin.edu.au
 - Business and Law: bl-learninginnovations@deakin.edu.au
 - Arts and Education: artsed-digital-learning@deakin.edu.au

Step 2: Start a session

- a) Join your session at least 15 minutes prior to the start time to check your audio and video
- b) Go to 'My settings' and upload your profile picture
- c) Go to 'Share Content' and add the resources you will use in this session
- d) Share the introduction slide of your presentation so the attendees know which session they are in when they join
- e) Don't forget to record your session at the top left hand side and select 'Start Recording'

Step 3: Conduct a session

- a) Introduce the session by engaging students to test the technology – use the emojis in the chat functionality to gauge if anyone is having difficulties (remember to use both written and audio channels for this as some students might only have audio, while others might only have vision)
- b) You have the ability to use audio and video next to your profile picture. We recommend using this in the first 5 – 10 minutes to increase personal connection (ie. social presence).
- c) The collaboration panel has: Chat, Attendees, Share Content, and My Settings:
 - Chat: use this to engage student in discussion or use of emojis
 - Attendees: use this to see who is attending. You can also mute all attendees.
 - Share whiteboard: use this for exploring an idea or brainstorming
 - Share application: use this to share your desktop or application on your computer. We recommend testing this prior to using as there may be some issues with how it displays
 - Share files: select the files you would like to share and select Share Now – these will populate on the screen for you to share with attendees
- d) Polling: you cannot pre-prepare questions within Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, so you will need to have your questions on your slide deck and use the polling this way. You only have options of MCQ and Yes/No polling questions
- e) Breakout groups: these have the same features as the main room and can be used to facilitate small group activities. Moderators can create breakout groups randomly within the session. Please note: students cannot be allocated to breakout groups prior to the session

Step 4: End a session

- a) Ensure you 'End Recording'
- b) Click on your profile picture and select 'Leave Session'
- c) Once everyone has left the session, the recording will be processed and available to students in CloudDeakin

Additional supports available during this time

- Faculty Support Teams can help set up your session, offer training and have help guides
 - SEBE: Sebe-clouddeakinsupport@deakin.edu.au; [SEBE support website](#)
 - Health: Hedu@deakin.edu.au; [Health support website](#); Pod email: dlf-healthpod@deakin.edu.au
 - Business and Law: bl-learninginnovations@deakin.edu.au; [B&L support site](#)
 - Arts and Education: artsed-digital-learning@deakin.edu.au; [A&E support site](#); Pod email: dlf-artsedpod@deakin.edu.au
- [DTeach](#) also has additional resources on how to use BC Ultra
- [Blackboard Collaborate Ultra website](#) has information on moderating sessions
- Check in with the [Transitioning Teaching Online](#) website for current information during COVID-19
- Subscribe to the [DTeach newsletter](#) for updates on teaching and learning, and COVID-19 information

Q&A from your colleagues

Getting started/settings

- *How is Ultra different from Bb Collaborate Original?* Bb Collaborate Original has been retired. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra is the only product available from now on.
- *How do I upload a profile image?* Click on 'My Settings'. Click on the circle next to your name. Click on 'Upload'. Select your file and click on 'Open'. You can adjust your photo accordingly. Once you're happy, click on 'I like it!'. Click 'Save' to confirm.
- *Are all Blackboard Collaborate Ultra sessions recorded or do we need to choose to record the session?* You need to start the recording. To record, click on the 'Open Session menu' (top left hand side), click on 'Start Recording'. NB. You can't pause a recording, and recording stops when you leave the main room to go into a Breakout Room.
- *Can you use hyperlinks in PPT slides?* No. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra converts slides into images so if you want to share links, put them in the chat or provide them to students beforehand
- *Can students see the messages on the recorded version?* Yes, but they will need to open the Chat panel using the purple 'X' in the bottom right hand corner. Private chats are not recorded.
- *How well will embedded videos work in the PPT? Will there be a lag?* Videos do not work as embedded videos (as your slides get converted to pictures). Have the video open in another tab, then use share screen or send the link in the chat for students to watch.
- *Is there a way to share YouTube videos with sound?* It is best to share the link with the students and ask students to watch it and then come back into the main Blackboard Collaborate Ultra session, or you can 'Share application', share 'Chrome tab', select 'Add audio' –but there are some limitations with this.
- *How do I share screen?* Click on 'Share Content' then click on Share Application/Screen. It is recommend that you have another tab open to do this, and test this out before the session.
- *How do you make the screen larger?* Go to 'Show View Controls' on the left hand site, click on that and a 'zoom' icon will pop up and you can use this to make the PPT slides bigger.

Polling

- *Where is the polling function?* Click on 'Share Content' then click on Polling.
- *Do I need to pre-prepare the polls?* Yes for MCQ, Yes/No can be done at the time
- *Can poll responses be shown to students?* Yes
- *Are the poll results recorded?* Yes
- *Can you move the poll results so that the question is visible?* No, best to have your questions on the left hand side of the slide of the slide so they are not obscured by poll results.

Mobile responsiveness

- *Are there issues for students viewing everything via mobile phone?* Blackboard Collaborate Ultra is responsive, students will be able to use Blackboard Collaborate Ultra on their mobile with their web browsers.

Breakout groups

- *How does the breakout group function work?* Breakout groups let you create small discussion groups that are separate from the main group. Students can work together in these and then come back to the larger group.
- *Can you talk to the breakout group, or only the 'chat board'?* You can chat, talk and present in breakout groups, similar functions as in the larger group.
- *If you move in and out of the groups during the seminar, does it maintain the same group members?* If you tick the box 'Allow attendees to switch groups' when creating breakout groups, students will be able to move to other groups.
- *How do you chat to the whole group when they are in breakout groups?* As moderator, you can post a chat to everyone. Don't forget that as a moderator you can move around to different groups,

Raise hand functionality

- *How do I use the raise hand functionality as a moderator?* Raise hand function is useful for students if they wish to have a chance to ask questions.
- *If a student raises a hand in the breakout group, can I see it in the main room?* Moderator will be able to see if any students raise hand in breakout groups under Attendees Panel.

Chat functionality

- *Can you create separate chats for certain questions?* No, but you can have a private chat with a single student, and you can assign separate questions for each breakout group.
- *How do I stop sound alerts associated with new chat posts?* Go to the 'My Settings', expand 'Notifications and Settings'. Uncheck the 'Audio Notification' under 'Someone raises their hand'.

Finishing the session

- *How do you remove everyone from the session?*
From the 'attendees' panel, click on the 'attendee controls' of an individual and select 'remove from session'
- *Can you delay a recording release date/time?* No. As soon as the all users exit the session, recordings will be automatically processed and available to students in the Unit Site.

