HOW TO ACCESS AND USE COLLABORATE ULTRA

This guide explains what Collaborate Ultra is and where to find it. It advises on system requirements and how to set up to use Collaborate Ultra. It also provides some tips for participating in a virtual classroom session and information on accessibility.

It includes how to use the various tools in Collaborate Ultra including using chat, audio and video so that you can participate effectively and get the most from your online live sessions.

Collaborate Ultra is a virtual classroom tool. Your courses will use it to provide live teaching sessions where you can engage with your classmates and lecturer, from anywhere in the world.
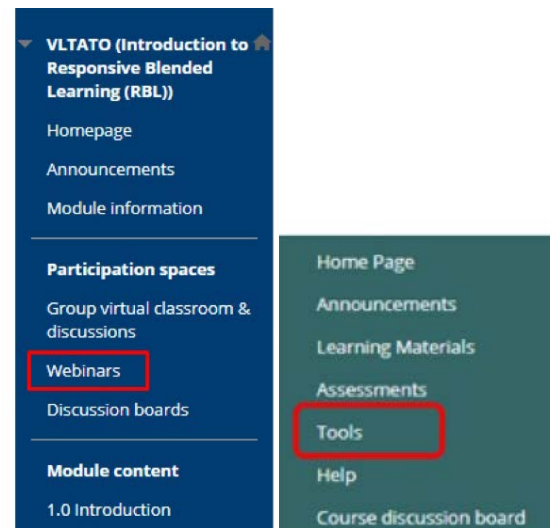
WHY USE COLLABORATE ULTRA

Live sessions using Collaborate Ultra enable you to discuss course content, clarify your thinking and to meet your lecturer and other students. Live sessions are an important part of any course and can make a difference to your enjoyment and success in your study.

SECTION 1: ACCESSING COLLABORATE ULTRA

HOW TO ACCESS COLLABORATE ULTRA

Step 1: Once you've opened your course site on the VLE (Vision), click on **'Webinars'** under the **'Participation spaces'** section in the side navigation menu.

Alternatively, if your menu does not show the **'webinars'** link, click **'Tools'** and then **'Blackboard Collaborate Ultra'**.

ENTERING THE COLLABORATE ULTRA ROOM

Step 1: When you click on the link to join the room you will be asked to enter your name. Please type your real name in full. All participants in the room (and on the recording) will be able to see your name.

If there is a reason you require to be anonymous, please discuss this in advance with your lecturer.
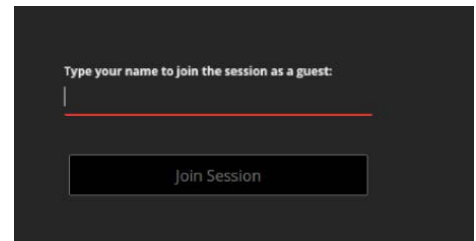
Step 2: Collaborate Ultra should detect your camera and microphone displaying a pop-up window to confirm which tools to use.

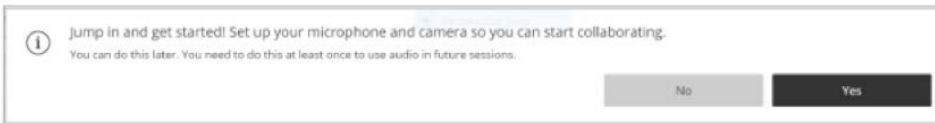**Note:** the pop-up window may be different depending on the browser that you are using.

Step 3: Select **'Allow'** so that Collaborate Ultra can access your equipment.

SET UP YOUR MICROPHONE AND WEBCAM

It is recommended that you check your audio and video setup every time you launch a Collaborate Ultra session. This will ensure that your audio and video are working correctly before you need to use them in the session.

Step 1: When you first join a Collaborate Ultra session you will be prompted to set up your audio and video. Click **'Yes'** to begin.


(i) Jump in and get started! Set up your microphone and camera so you can start collaborating.
You can do this later. You need to do this at least once to use audio in future sessions.

No | Yes

If you are not prompted to set up your audio and video, you can set up it at any time in **'My Settings'.**

Step 2: To access your **'My Settings'** area, open the **'Collaborate Panel'**.
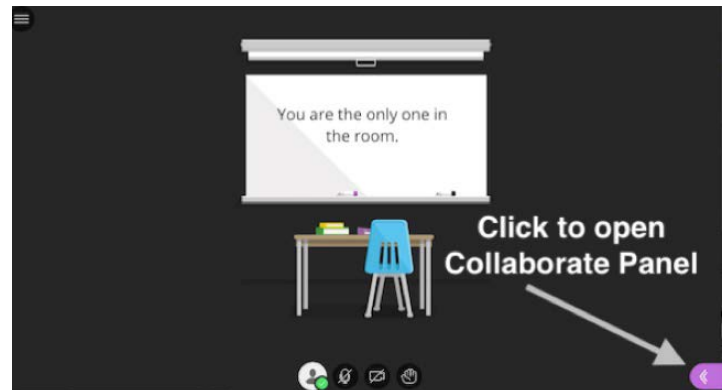
Step 3: Click the **'My Settings'** button at the bottom of the page.
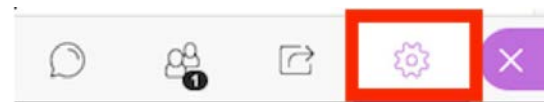
Step 4: This will open your My Settings. Click **'Select Set Up your Camera and Microphone'** to set up your audio and video. Follow the on-screen prompts to set up your audio and video.

You must give the browser permission to use your audio so that you can be heard. If you also want to be seen you need to permit it to use your video.

By default, you are hidden and muted after you complete the setup. Click the microphone and camera icons to begin full meeting participation. With your keyboard, press Alt + M to turn your microphone on and off. Press Alt + C to turn your camera on and off.


TESTING AUDIO AND VIDEO

Step 1: If you are having audio or video issues the first thing to do is to check that you've got things correctly set up on your computer:

- Have you got your volume switched on and your mute off?
- Is your computer connected to the relevant audio / video source e.g. the correct headset / webcam if you're using one?

Step 2: If that doesn't help then you can test your audio and video using the wizard on Collaborate Ultra. Click on the double purple arrow to the lower right-hand side of your screen to open the Collaborate Panel.

Step 3: Click on the **cog wheel** to open the **'settings'**.

Step 4: Click on **'set up your camera and microphone'** and then follow the instructions to test, and if necessary, fix your camera and microphone.
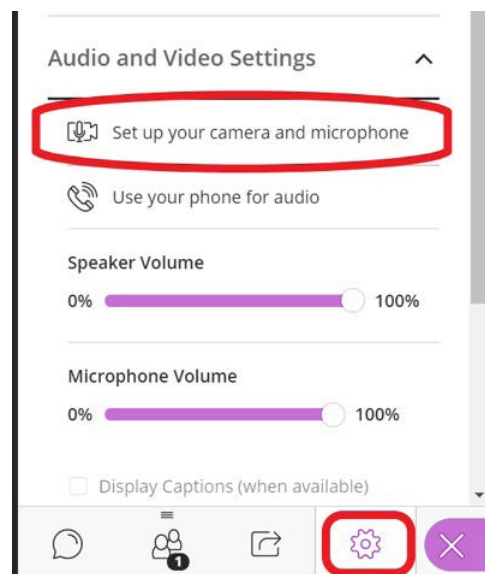
If you do not see a pop-up window like the one pictured to the right, it may be because your computer does not permit pop-up windows. You will need to enable this before proceeding. You can use your internet search to find instructions online **'how to turn off the pop-up window blocker'**.

Note: So as not to hold up the session, it is useful to check your audio and video at least 10 minutes before the start of the session.
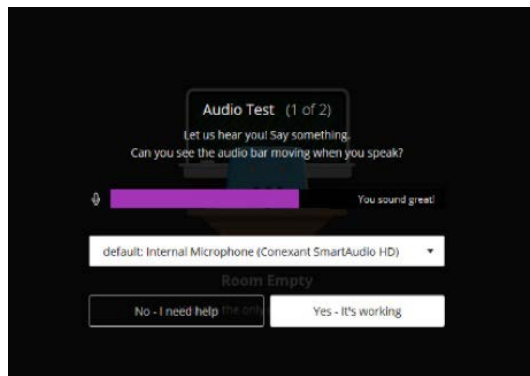
Step 5: If the audio and video wizard does not solve your issues then it may be to do with your computer rather than the room. Try leaving the room and checking your computer audio/video set-up as explained in step 1 and join again once you are sure they are correct.
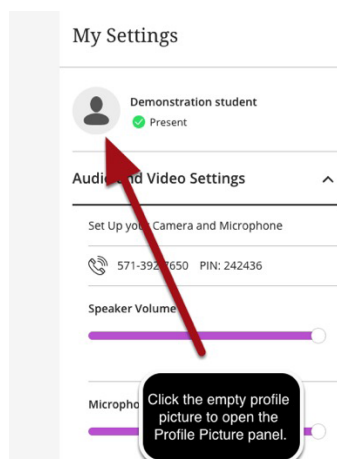
UPLOADING A PROFILE PICTURE

To make sessions more personal, you may wish to add a profile picture for everyone in the session to see.

Step 1: Click the **'My Settings'** button at the bottom of the session window.

Step 2: Once the **'My Settings'** panel opens, click the **'My Settings'** tab.
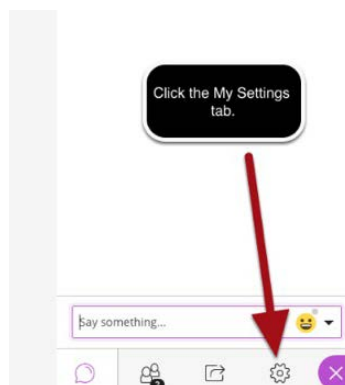
Step 3: Click the empty profile picture to open the Profile Picture panel.

Step 4: Once the Profile Picture panel opens, click the **'Upload'** button and select your image. Then click the **Save** button.

SYSTEM CHECKS AND SETUP

Before you begin, check to ensure that your computer and browser are compatible with Collaborate Ultra. You will need:

- A modern computer with a good internet connection, or possibly a mobile device with strong WiFi. You can also download the Blackboard app for iPad/iPhone/Android if you would like to join using a mobile device. Slower internet connections may cause issues with audio and video.

- An operating system Windows 7+, Mac OS 10.9+

- You can use the built-in microphone and speakers on your computer but having headphones will greatly improve the ability to hear others in the web meeting and to reduce background noise / interference. If you have a mobile phone you may wish to use the headphones/microphone that came with it. A wired headset (headphones with a microphone) is recommended; Bluetooth headphones are not recommended.

- Collaborate Ultra, our virtual classroom tool, is only supported using Chrome or Safari browsers. Make sure that your browser is up to date. Google Chrome is the optimal browser.

- Your online experience can be improved by closing unnecessary applications (email, web browsers/tabs, etc.). This will help to limit distractions and improve your connection.

- Having a stable internet connection is helpful. The easiest way to do this is using a wired connection. If this is not possible try to reduce the number of people using your Wifi whilst you are accessing an online session.

- Try to find a quiet place where you'll be able to participate in the online session both verbally and via the text chat.

ACCESSIBILITY

Collaborate Ultra includes the following:

- Full screen reader support (For the best experience with your screen reader, use Firefox and Jaws on a Windows system. On a Mac use Safari and VoiceOver.)

- Global keyboard shortcuts for common actions. For more information see Keyboard Shortcuts.

- Screen reader support for whiteboard activities and uploaded files

- Live closed captioning. For more information see Live Closed Captioning.

For more information see **Accessibility in Blackboard Collaborate Ultra**.

SECTION 2: USING COLLABORATE ULTRA

### OVERVIEW OF THE COLLABORATE ULTRA VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

Collaborate Ultra consists of several areas:

- **Presentation area:** The content of the session is displayed here.
- **Session Menu:** Open to navigate session information and tools.
- **Collaborate Panel:** Engage with participants and modify your session settings.
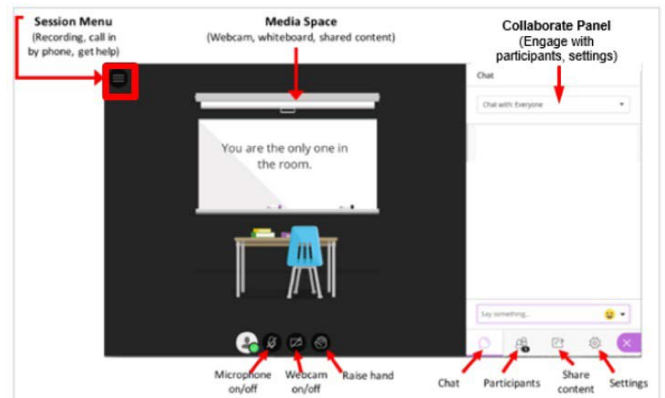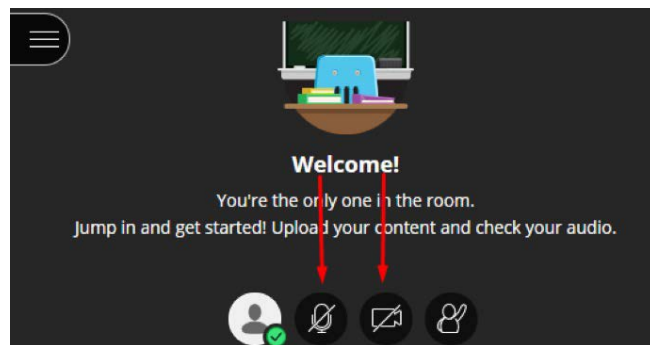

USING YOUR MICROPHONE AND VIDEO

Step 1: Click on the microphone or video at the bottom of your screen (below the presentation area) to switch them on. They will turn green.
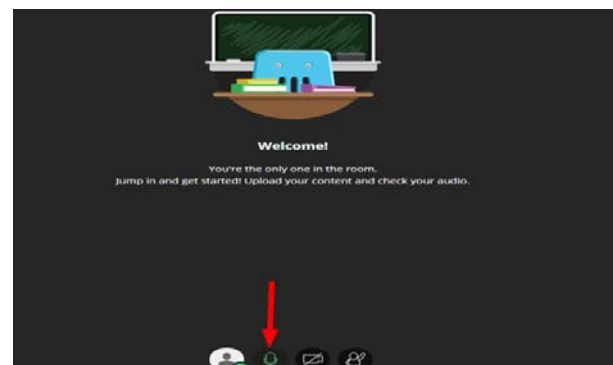
Step 2: Click on the microphone or video again to switch it off. It will turn white with a line through it, when it is switched off.
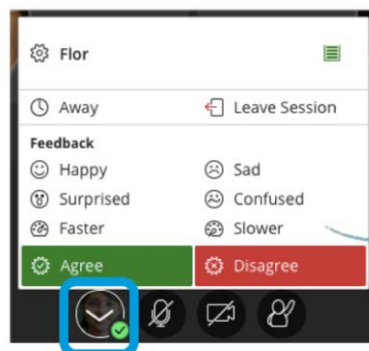

STATUS INDICATORS

You can use emojis and messages to indicate your status.

Click on the first icon to the left of the microphone symbol.

Open the status panel and click on the relevant word to indicate your status e.g. happy, sad, confused etc. This will appear next to your name in the participants list and in the chat panel.

SESSION TOOLS

In the collaborate panel, you will find session tools to use during live sessions.

Chat tool - Talk in the session using text. You can access the tool via the bubble icon.

Participant List - The Participant List is a tool for you to see who else is in the session.


RAISE YOUR HAND

At the bottom of the presentation area, you can raise your hand.

Click on the **'waving person'** icon to the right of the video icon. When you click on the waving person icon, it will turn purple. Click on it again to clear your status and the icon turns white.

When you put your hand up, your name will be shown at the top of the participant list alongside anyone else with their hand up, rather than in the usual alphabetical order.
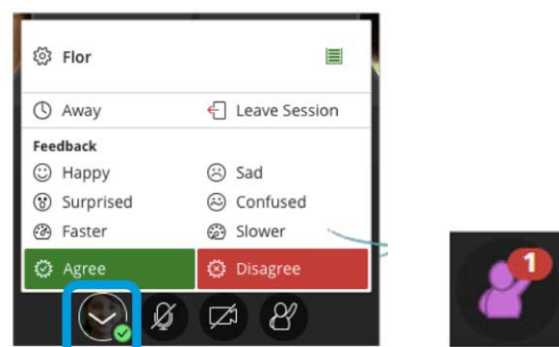
DRAWING TOOLS

You may be invited to using the drawing tools during a live session. These tools enable you to draw or write in the presentation area on the screen.

Select: Use the arrow to select an object on the screen. After you select it you can resize, move, and delete it.

Pointer: Use the hand to point to different areas of the visible slide. Other participants can see wherever you are pointing.

Pencil: Use the pencil to draw free hand on the screen.

Square: Use the square to draw a rectangle, ellipse, or a straight line.

Text: Click on 'T' to type text on the screen. This will appear wherever you position the cursor. You can use the 'select' tool to resize or move the text.

Colour: Change the colour of text or shapes
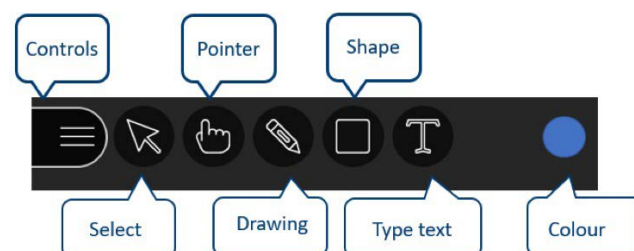
CONTROLS

To access the controls, click on the three lines in the top left-hand corner.

View Controls: You can click on the three lines option to show and hide View Controls.

Zoom In: Make the content bigger. Move the content around to see everything.

Zoom Out: Make the content smaller.

Best Fit: Take advantage of your screen size. Content adjusts to be completely viewable in the available area. It displays as large as possible while keeping the aspect ratio intact.

Actual Size: Return the image to the original size.
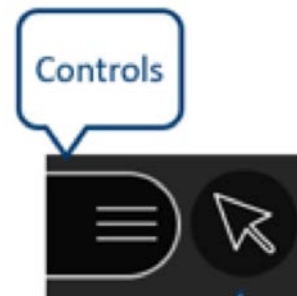
USING BREAKOUT GROUPS

Breakout groups are small, private groups, separate from the main virtual classroom. These can be used for 1:1 or group discussions and activities. Breakout groups can only be set up by the moderator of the session (this is usually your lecturer).

WHEN BREAKOUT GROUPS START

When breakout groups start you will see a message on screen saying 'starting breakout groups'.

Sometimes there is a short delay between moving from the main room to the breakout group. If you have a poor internet connection you may be disconnected at this point and reappear in the main room. Don't worry about this your lecturer will be able to move you back to the breakout group.

Starting breakout groups

WHAT DOES A BREAKOUT GROUP LOOK LIKE?

A breakout group looks like the main room with the whiteboard, draw tools and chat. Your group name will be listed at the top of the chat. You will have your own private audio, video, whiteboard, application sharing and chat within your group. Nobody else can see or hear what is being shared in a breakout group unless they join that group. Breakout groups are not recorded.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IN A BREAKOUT GROUP?

In a breakout group, you can use the tools as you did in the main room:

- **Mic**
- **Video**
- **Chat**
- **Drawing**

You can also share documents and share your screen.

CHAT IN BREAKOUT GROUPS

When you enter the breakout group, the chat will default to that group. Only you and other people in the room will be able to see what you write.

However, if you need to contact your lecturer or write a message in the 'Everyone' chat, you can still do that. Click on the back arrow next to your group name at the top of the chat pane. You can then select a different chat.
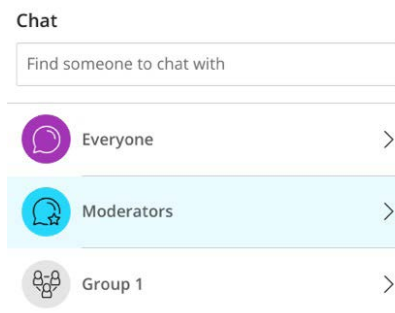
The above information covers the core functions you need to use a breakout group. There are other collaboration tools which can be used in breakout groups but these are explained in the separate 'Breakout groups' guidance for staff and students.

TOP TIPS

- **Mute your microphone** when not speaking. This prevents distracting background noise e.g. typing or a private conversation.
- **Set your status as Away** if you need to step away for a minute e.g. to go to the bathroom, answer the door etc. This lets everyone know that you are not available.

- **Close other programs.** Close all programs and streaming services on your computer except for the browser you are using for your Collaborate session.
- **Use headphones if possible.** Cut down on the background noise and use headphones.
- **Disable Adblockers.** Browser Adblockers can turn off your audio and video and can cause buttons to not show up.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Collaborate Ultra does not detect my camera and/or microphone

Make sure that you have permission to connect external devices to your computer.

For Windows users: if Collaborate Ultra does not detect your headset/headphone/microphone and you have full administration permissions, go to **'Control Panel > Hardware and Sound > Manage audio devices'** and select your audio device as the default choice.

For Mac users: Go to **'System Preferences'**. Go to **'Sound'**. Go to **'Input'** and increase the **'Input Volume'**. Try speaking into the microphone once and then click **'Retry'** on the Proctortrack window. Also, make sure the **'Use ambient noise reduction'** checkbox is unchecked.

If you have any technical issues accessing or joining the live session notify your lecturer, then contact **ISHelp@hw.ac.uk.**

FURTHER RESOURCES

Further guidance on the use of Collaborate Ultra is available at https://help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/Ultra/Participant.

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