

Blackboard Help

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Collaborate Ultra Release - May 2015

Here's everything you need to know about the initial release of Blackboard Collaborate with the Ultra experience.

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Features

The "for Moderator" links in the table take you to the moderator help.

Feature	Description
Accessibility	<p>Blackboard is committed to remaining the market leader in accessibility with Collaborate. Currently, the Collaborate with the Ultra experience meets most of the WCAG 2.0 accessibility standards. This includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-screen reader support of all key workflows • Global keyboard shortcuts for common actions Additional keyboard shortcuts include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ To turn the microphone on and off, press Alt + M. ◦ To turn the camera on and off, press Alt + C. ◦ To raise and lower your hand, press Alt + H. ◦ To move to the next slide, press Alt + Page Up. On a Mac, press Alt + Fn + Up Arrow. ◦ To move back a slide, press Alt + Page Down. On a Mac, press Alt + Fn + Down Arrow. • Screen reader support for whiteboard activities and uploaded files, without requiring complex conversions
Application Sharing	<p>Application sharing is in high definition. Moderators can share specific applications or their entire desktop. Application sharing requires a Chrome™ extension. This extension does not require your users to download and install additional software or restart their session.</p>

	<p>➞ More on how moderators share content</p>
High-Quality Audio and Video	<p>Audio and video are in high definition. Blackboard Collaborate with the Ultra experience is built on a Web Real-Time Communication (WebRTC) technology stack. Users using Chrome can see up to five high definition videos at a time. The media experience dynamically adjusts, according to bandwidth and network constraints.</p> <p>Moderators can choose to not allow participants to use audio or video during their sessions.</p>
Bandwidth	<p>The Ultra experience uses WebRTC. The experience dynamically adjusts, according to bandwidth and network constraints.</p> <p>The minimum viable experience for participation requires 128kbps download bandwidth.</p>
Chat	<p>Participants can use the chat tool as a group. Users can express ideas, emotions, and so on using twemoji, Twitter's emoji (emoticon images) standard. Moderators can choose to turn chat off during their sessions.</p>
File Sharing	<p>File sharing is in high definition. Users can share images, PDFs, and PowerPoint® presentations. Uploaded files are converted by a third party service called Box.</p> <p>Box converts files to Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG). Original and converted files are deleted from the Box system when delivered to the new Collaborate.</p> <p>➞ More on how moderators share content</p>
First Time Connection Walkthrough	<p>The first time users log in to the Ultra experience, we walk them through how to set up their devices for audio and video, how to set their profiles, and how to turn on their audio and video. Users can switch back to the Classic experience without losing any already scheduled sessions.</p>
Navigation	<p>Users enjoy simpler navigation when they choose to switch to the the Ultra experience.</p> <p>➞ More on how moderators navigate</p>
No Downloads or Installs	<p>The Ultra experience is entirely browser-based and does not require any downloads or installs to work.</p>
Presenter	<p>The new presenter role allows students to present without providing them with full moderator privileges.</p>
Profiles	<p>Users are given simple profiles that they can update with personal avatars. These avatars appear in the participant list, chat thread, and in the video conferencing layout when video is not being used. Moderators can choose to turn this feature off in their sessions.</p>
Real-time Annotations and Text Entry	<p>Users can make real-time edits and text entries on shared files and the whiteboard. Moderators can choose to turn this feature off in their sessions.</p>
SaaS Deployment	<p>Collaborate is a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) deployment. SaaS is a delivery model that is centrally hosted, distributed over the internet, and deployed almost instantaneously.</p>

WebRTC	<p>The Ultra experience uses WebRTC for Chrome users. The experience adjusts dynamically according to bandwidth and network constraints.</p> <p>➞ Visit the WebRTC website (available in English only)</p> <p>The new Collaborate supports Flash for users on Firefox, Internet Explorer, and Safari.</p>
WebRTC Audio Prioritization	<p>WebRTC allows for five active speakers. It uses a voice detection algorithm to determine who should appear in the conference layout. New speakers who do not appear in the conference layout may take a couple seconds before being heard.</p>
Whiteboard	<p>Users have access to a basic whiteboard for real-time annotations and text entry.</p>

➞ [More on the Ultra experience](#)

Networking

To allow Collaborate with the Ultra experience to run on your network, visit the [Collaborate with the Ultra Experience Networking Information article](#) on Behind the Blackboard (available in English only).

Performance and Scalability

Collaborate is available only as a SaaS offering. The components that require elasticity or on-demand scale, such as storage and the multi-point control units (MCUs) providing audio and video to participants leverage cloud technologies.

 *The initial release of the Ultra experience has a session limit of 50 participants.*

Roles

Users can have the following roles in the Ultra experience: moderator, presenter, or participant

- **Moderator:** Users with this role have full control over all content being shared. They can make any participant a presenter or a moderator. Moderators see hand raise notifications and can lower hands. They can remove participants from a session, but they cannot remove other moderators. Moderators can set the session settings, including deciding what participants can and can't do.
- **Presenter:** This is a new role that is designed to allow students to present without giving them full moderator privileges. Presenters can upload, share, and edit content. They can also stop any shared content.
- **Participant:** Users with this role can enable and disable notifications, such as when participants enter and leave a session or when someone has posted something to the chat. The moderator of the session determines the participant privileges.

Integration

Currently, Collaborate includes a scheduling option in the Session Administration Server (SAS) for Ultra experience sessions while still supporting scheduling for the Classic experience.

Collaborate Ultra Known Issues - May 2015

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