Quick Start Guide for All Users

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STEP 1: Accessing Collaborate

1. First, use Chrome or Firefox to access Collaborate.
2. Next, go to your Blackboard course and find Collaborate
   a. Original course: Go to Other Bb Tools -> Blackboard Collaborate Ultra
   b. Ultra course: Select Blackboard Collaborate -> Join session
3. Join either the course room OR the specific session your instructor has created.
4. If you cannot load the Collaborate page, make sure you have third-party cookies enabled.
   - Chrome:
     [*].bbcollab.com
     [*].us.bbcollab.com
   - Firefox
     https://bbcollab.com
     https://[*].us-lti.bbcollab.com:443

STEP 2: Setting up Audio & Video

1. Click on the purple << arrows in the lower right corner of the Collaborate screen. This will open the Collaborate panel.
2. Click on the gear icon to open your settings.
3. Click Set up your camera and microphone. NOTE: Some browsers require access to your microphone to play audio, even if you don't plan to speak. To hear others in the session, you must give the browser permission to access the microphone.
4. Follow the prompts to select and test your microphone and webcam. TIP: Use a headset whenever possible. Avoid using the computer's built-in audio components. This helps prevent environmental noises from being picked up by the on-board microphone.

Checking your audio

If you cannot hear or say anything, run the audio set-up wizard again in STEP 2. If your speakers and microphone are set up properly, adjust your speaker and microphone volume in My Settings.

If your audio is not resolved,

1. Check your browser settings to make sure it has permission to use audio and video to participate in a session. Select the appropriate link for your browser:
   - Chrome
   - Firefox
   - Safari
   - Edge
2. Check the permissions for your operating system.
   - Mac OS microphone and webcam permissions
   - Windows 10 microphone and webcam permissions
3. Check to see that the correct speakers are selected for your OS.
   - Mac go to Apple System Preferences Sound
   - Windows go to Control Panel Hardware and Sound Sound or search for Sound and select Sound from the Control Panel in the search menu.
4. Make sure the microphone is located appropriately.
   - Placing the microphone directly under your nose will result in breathing being heard by session participants.
   - Placing the microphone too far away from your mouth will result in low audio and the possibility of environmental noise being captured.
5. Make sure that you are using a supported web browser and that it is up to date.
   - Try clearing web browser cache and restarting the session.
   - Close out of your web browser and reopen it.
   - If it is still not working, try a different supported web browser.
6. Check for sustained high CPU usage which is an indicator that your computer is working too hard. High CPU usage for our intents and purposes is defined as sustained CPU usage of 90% - 100%, meaning the CPU usage doesn't often fall below that level or frequently returns to that level. High CPU usage is most commonly seen when using an older computer or when too many programs are running.
   - On Windows open the Task Manager (ctrl+alt+delete Task Manager). Total CPU usage is shown at the bottom of the Task Manager screen.
   - On a Mac, open the Activity Monitor (Go Utilities Activity Monitor). Total CPU usage is shown at the bottom of the Activity Monitor screen.
   - Click here for instructions on how to fix high CPU usage.
• Shut down any unnecessary programs that are running on the computer before starting your Collaborate Ultra session. As a general rule, if you don't plan on sharing an application, close it!

7. Reboot your computer.

Need more help? See Troubleshooting Audio Problems in Collaborate

Checking your network connection

Collaborate is constantly sending and receiving data while a session is taking place. Therefore, Collaborate is more sensitive to general network conditions than a generic web page download.

If you are having trouble with your Collaborate connection, please try the following:

Check your home network:

1. Collaborate provides a Network Connection Status tool that is used to monitor the health of your internet connection. The tool will indicate if you are experiencing packet loss or latency on your network's uplink or downlink.
2. Try a different computer on the same network connection. If the alternate computer exhibits the same symptoms, the issue is likely caused by your network or ISP.
3. Try the same computer on a different network connection (ex. coffee shop, local library, or cellular hotspot). If issues are resolved by changing networks, then the issue is most likely being caused by your home network or ISP.

If you suspect that your network or ISP is causing your Collaborate session issues, please try the following:

1. Use a hardwired ethernet connection to your router.
2. If hardwiring is not an option, and you must use wifi, be sure that you are located as close to the router as physically possible.
3. Ensure that the router is properly placed in the home for maximum efficiency.
    • Place the router in a high spot in the center of the room, away from other electronic devices, windows, microwaves etc.
4. Restart the modem and/or router.
5. Reboot your computer.
6. Shut down all unnecessary programs on the computer being used to access the Collaborate session, especially programs that use an internet connection such as email, instant messaging clients, streaming services (Netflix, YouTube), P2P clients, other web conferencing options (Skype, Slack, Webex), etc.
7. Limit the number of devices and services using the network connection in the home like tablets, cell phones, smart TVs, streaming devices and streaming services (Roku, Firestick, Hulu, Netflix), gaming consoles, and other computers.
8. Call your ISP and ask them to test your network components.
9. If you purchased your router separately, call your router manufacturer for router support.

Need more help? See Troubleshooting Networking Issues for Collaborate

Learn more about Collaborate Network Connection Management.

Related articles:

How do I use the dial-in phone number for a Collaborate session?

If you think the issue is Collaborate or you've been repeatedly disconnected from Collaborate, you can submit an issue to Blackboard. Please see Reporting an issue to Blackboard Collaborate

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