Collaborate for teachers

Collaborate via Moodle is an effective tool to use for presentations, seminars or lectures in courses with a large number of students. Currently, it replaces the u:stream service.

Collaborate is a tool for real-time video conferences with which you can add files, share applications or interact via a virtual whiteboard. You can share presentations or poll your students. Students can give feedback in the chat or via audio.

Collaborate is optimised for courses with a large number of students. Alternatively, you can use BigBlueButton for up to 100 participants or Jitsi of the University of Vienna for up to 10 participants.

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The web browsers Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge are fully supported. Opera 67 is currently not supported. If you cannot use individual functions, please try a different web browser.

Please do not use Collaborate while a VPN connection is active. This may cause interruptions.

Part 1 - Preparation and implementation in Moodle

Adding to Moodle

To use Collaborate as part of your Moodle course, you first have to integrate it by selecting Add an activity or resource.

Configuration

1. As with any Moodle activity, define the general settings and additional options under General:
   - Name your session under Session name (this will be displayed as a link in the Moodle course).
   - If necessary, add further information under Description. Tick Display description on course page if you would like the description to be visible.
   - You also have to define the Start of the session. Participants can join the session 15 minutes before it starts.
   - Additionally, you have to define the planned Duration (between 30 minutes and 2.5 hours or the duration of the course = semester).
2. In the **Grade** section you can define whether the students’ participation should be graded (according to a **scale** or using **points**). If you specify a grading scheme here, in the **Grades** area of the course a corresponding column is added.

3. Further options to customise the activity can be found in the following sections: **Common module settings**, **Restrict access** and **Tags**. These options include the availability of the activity on the course page and the group mode, for example.

4. **Save** your settings and return to the course page.

**Accessing the Collaborate session**
1. Click the **new activity you created** on the **course page** (the date of the session).

2. Within the time period you specified under **General**, the option **Join session** will appear, that both you and the students can see. Click this button to join the session. This button will not be visible to you or the other participants outside of the specified time period.

![Collaborate-Session](image)

**Part 2 - Using Collaborate**

⚠️ By default, Collaborate is displayed in the language you selected for your web browser. You cannot change this setting manually in the web conferencing tool.

**Getting started**

If you click the button **Join session** to switch to the Collaborate session, it will be set up for you. First, depending on your web browser settings, you will be asked to **give permission to access a microphone of your choice**. You have to give this permission to be able to communicate with your students during the session.

![Collaborate-Session](image)

The next step is a check if the **audio and video connections** are correctly set up. If this is the case, please click the button **Yes - it's working** in the displayed **audio test and video test**. If you do not have an active webcam, you can skip the video test.
In Collaborate, you can use the following functions to customise the session:

- **Uploading presentations** in different file formats
- **Recording sessions**
- **Sharing audio, webcam and/or screen**
- **Chat feature**, both private and public
- **Whiteboard function**, i.e. writing or drawing on a virtual whiteboard or directly on the uploaded slides

**Collaborate user interface**

Collaborate offers various areas with numerous features (see details in the following section):
A - Content presentation area for displaying presentations, the digital whiteboard and videos

B - Collaborate Session menu

C - Functions to participate actively in the session

D - Collaborate panel

Collaborate Session menu

To open the session menu, click the icon (hamburger icon) on the top left of the window.

This menu includes the Start Recording function, various help topics as well as a Leave session function.

⚠️ During recording, all interactions as well as the chat are recorded. The recording can be downloaded by the students afterwards.

- Start Recording
- Blackboard Collaborate Help
- Leave session

You can close the menu by clicking the X icon.
**Participating actively in the session**

In this area you can find several functions that enable **interactive communication** (from left to right):

- My Status and Settings
- Share audio
- Share video (giving permission to access your webcam)
- Raise hand (intended for participation by students)

If you also Share Content, additional functions may be displayed.

**Collaborate panel**

To open the Collaborate panel, click the « icon (the pink button at the bottom right of the window).

In this panel, additional functions for holding a session are displayed (from left to right):

- Chat feature, both for chats with moderators and all participants
- Overview of session attendees
- Functions to Share Content (whiteboard, screen, presentation files, polls, etc.)

By clicking the X icon you can close the collaborate panel at any time.

**Uploading and sharing a presentation**

You can upload files directly in Collaborate to display them for your students.

You can upload images (*.jpg, *.png), **PowerPoint files** (*.pptx, *.ppt) or **PDF files**. You can also upload **several files all at once** and select them one by one to display them for your students.
You cannot upload OpenOffice files (*.odp). Export them to PDF files before uploading.

To publish or share your uploaded file, select your file in the overview and then click the Share Now button.

To rename or remove your file, click the ... icon on the right-hand side of the file name.

If you share a file that contains several slides or pages, you have to click Share Now first before being able to Select a slide to begin sharing with your students.

On the top left of the content presentation area, various tools are displayed to point something out or write on slides or pages.
You can Stop Sharing the file at any time by clicking the relevant button on the top right of the content presentation area.

Recording sessions

You can find the recording function in the Collaborate Session menu.

Click the button Start Recording to start recording the session. If you click the button (now labelled Stop Recording) once again, the recording of the session is stopped.

Several minutes after the recording has been stopped (if applicable, already during the session if the recording was stopped beforehand), the recordings are available in Moodle to you and your students.

The following contents can be recorded:

- Audio and video (microphone and webcam)
- Whiteboard notes
- Shared presentations
- Chat messages

Sharing audio, webcam and/or screen

You can decide to share audio and video via the bar at the bottom in the middle of the window:

You can activate them by clicking the relevant icon.

If you would like to share an application or your screen, this function is available on the Collaborate panel under Share Content.
Chat feature

You can communicate with all participants in a public chat, with moderators in a group chat or with individual participants in a one-to-one chat.

To do so, open the Collaborate panel and then click the Chat icon.

⚠️ If you make a recording, the chat history is also saved and it is available afterwards. Please bear this in mind and also notify your students of this.

Writing and drawing on slides (whiteboard)

In the Collaborate panel you can find an area for sharing content. This also includes the whiteboard, which you can use together with your students if needed.

ℹ️ This function is disabled for students by default. You can activate it for individual or all participants at any time.

As with the options for shared presentation files, several tools as well as a button for stopping the whiteboard are displayed.

⚠️ The resulting whiteboard can be saved as an image at any time, but before stopping the whiteboard function, by right-clicking the whiteboard itself.

Creating polls

You can ask your students one question at a time by using a poll.

To do so, open the Collaborate panel and select Share Content. You can find the Polling option here:
There are two types of polling you can choose from:

- Multiple Choice (no more than 5 answers)
- Yes/No Choices

We recommend that you create a dedicated slide on which the poll question as well as all answer choices with their respective letters (max. A-E) are displayed.

Click the Start button to start polling all students.

If you would like to end the polling, click the End polling icon (on the top right of the polling panel). If you would like to lock the poll, click Lock Poll at the bottom of the polling panel.

Click Show Responses to publish the results.

Help and tutorials

In Collaborate itself you can start a tutorial or view help topics later via the navigation menu if needed.
Ending/leaving the session

There are a few different ways to end a session, after which students can no longer open the session in Collaborate.

- After the scheduled duration has passed
- All moderators leave the virtual classroom

To end the session, click the icon (Collaborate session menu) on the top left of your screen and then select the option Leave session.

⚠️ After ending your course unit, please use this option to leave the session. This way, the session is completely closed and resources can be redistributed.

Editing participant permissions

You can edit the participant permissions in the Collaborate panel by clicking the gear icon (My settings).
Part 3 - Follow-up in Moodle / Publishing recordings

If you made a recording in Collaborate, this recording is available to you after ending the recording.

Students also cannot access these recordings during the session but only after the session has ended.

Recordings

Collaborate-Session
Collaborate-Session - recording_1 [15 secs]  
Thursday, 26 March 2020, 8:44 PM  
0 view(s) · 0 download(s)

Collaborate-Session - recording_2 [1 min 21 secs]  
Thursday, 26 March 2020, 8:56 PM  
0 view(s) · 0 download(s)

It takes several minutes for the audio and video recordings to be fully rendered. They are only available in Moodle after the session has ended.
If you have started and stopped the recording several times during the session, separate recordings are created.

You can play back already existing recordings by clicking the link of the recording. If needed, the recordings can be downloaded (on the right-hand side, by clicking the download icon). The recordings can also be deleted (by clicking the X icon).

⚠️ Students can play back or download the recordings (please be aware of the content that is recorded. The chat history, for example, is also included).

FAQs

- **What information do I have to give to students?**
  You can find instructions for students under Collaborate for students.
- **Can I record my session?**
  Yes, further details are available under Recording sessions.
- **Who has the moderator permissions in Collaborate?**
  All roles in the Moodle course with editing permissions (i.e. teachers, tutors, clerical assistants).
- **Why can some of my students not hear me?**
  Please consult the troubleshooting tips on the information page for students.
- **Can students download annotations on the slides or whiteboard directly?**
  You can publish notes either as part of a recording or save them as an image. Detailed information is available under Writing/drawing on slides (whiteboard). Students cannot download files used for presentation. Upload them directly to Moodle.