



# Preparing for Live Online Teaching with Collaborate Ultra

At Trinity we use **Collaborate Ultra** for live online teaching. This is a virtual classroom within your Blackboard module that is designed to support synchronous teaching events, facilitating real-time communication between students and teachers. You can use Collaborate Ultra to support your 'real-time' live teaching in hybrid/blended or online provision.

Collaborate Ultra allows you to share audio, video, files and applications, use a **virtual whiteboard** and run **polls**. There is also a '**breakout room**' feature which you can use to support small group interaction within your classes.

It's worth remembering that the complexity of running a session increases as the numbers of participants grow. It is also much harder to be spontaneous when teaching through Collaborate than in-person – activities generally need much greater **scaffolding** to be effective.

## General Guidelines

1. **Practise** before leading your first session.
2. Open any web pages needed for screen sharing before the session begins and upload any documents you want to share in advance. They will remain available in each Collaborate session until they you delete them.
3. Prepare a **welcome slide** to have on display 15 minutes prior to starting the session.
4. **Humanise the teaching space**: greet participants and make small talk as they join your session. Request that students use profile photos where they cannot or will not use their video.
5. **Set expectations** around interactions before you begin teaching. Be explicit about if and how you expect students to use their microphones, 'raise hands', use chat board function.
6. Design opportunities for **interaction** into your session plan.
7. Co-teach or use student helpers as much as possible. Watch for student queries in chat messages and 'raised hands'.
8. Consider asking student helpers to help manage technical queries.



## Managing Break Out Rooms

In a live session you can use a 'break-out room' as a virtual space for participants to discuss their ideas in small groups and prepare to present their findings back to a larger group.

It is a good idea to **practice** setting up and using break out rooms in advance of a session.

If you decide to use break out rooms, keep in mind that:

- Breakout groups cannot be setup in advance of a class - but it is a good idea to **practice** setting them up before your session so that you are familiar with the process.
- 'Random assignment' of groups is easiest to do, but it still takes time and planning.
- Try and coordinate with a 'co-pilot' if you are using break out rooms. One of you can assign groups while the other person is facilitating live discussions and/or teaching.

## Additional Resources

More information on approaches to large-group teaching online is available from the [Academic Practice Digital Learning Hub](#).

For information on any of the technologies mentioned here, visit [Trinity IT Services](#).

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