

Student Guide to the New Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Introduction¹

During June 2020, Parker University is upgrading to the new Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, which offers important new features. Most of the upgrade improves what's underneath the surface to increase reliability and performance. This article guides you through other new features that you need to be aware of. These new features are almost exclusively confined to the session scheduling functionality outside of the actual Collaborate sessions. Once inside a session, you should recognize everything in the Collaborate Ultra user interface and feel right at home.

Key Differences in the Collaborate Scheduler

New Features

The new Collaborate Ultra has a completely redesigned Scheduler. This is the page you see when you go to the Live Meetings section of your Blackboard Course.

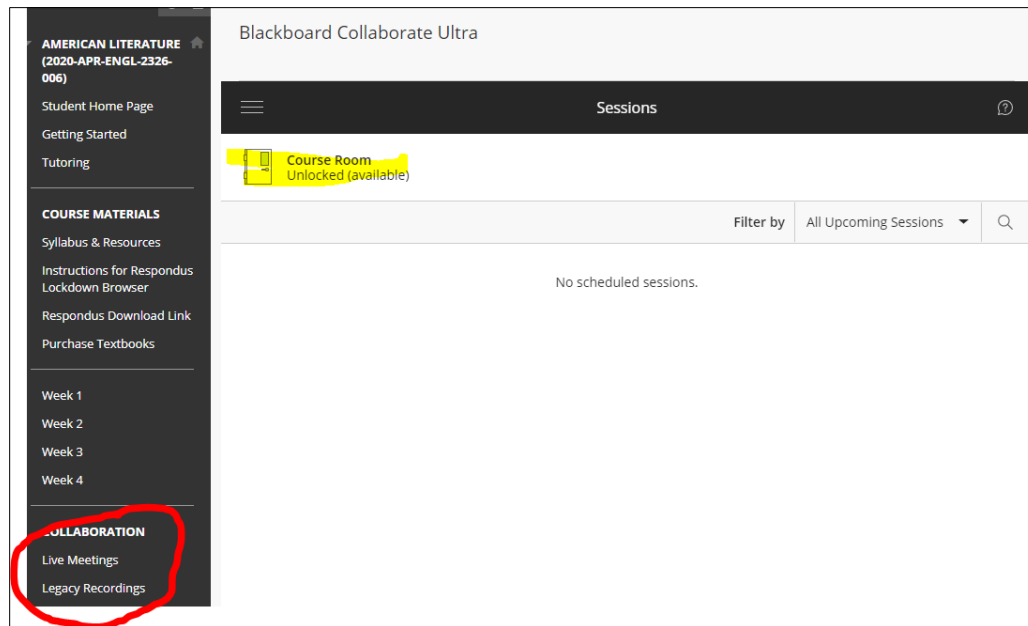
- Instructors are now able to lock and unlock the course room. They may choose to do this to keep students from entering other than during regularly scheduled sessions.
- Your instructor can easily schedule recurring sessions of regular meetings, such as weekly live sessions or office hours. You will be able to access all the recurring sessions from the same place, easily.
- Your instructor can now schedule simultaneous sessions for your course. For example, different sessions might be scheduled at the same time for multiple groups working among themselves.
- If needed, your instructor can now schedule a large Collaborate Ultra session to accommodate more than 250 users. Though your class might not need this capability, this should give you an idea of the increased performance capability of the new Collaborate.
- Your instructor can now generate detailed attendance reports for any live sessions. This will help them keep track of who was able to attend a session and how long they remained in it.

Important Differences Regarding Session Recordings

- Unfortunately, recordings of sessions made in the outdated version of Blackboard Collaborate Ultra are NOT transferred to the new Collaborate Ultra course room and are not accessible from there.
- For this reason, you may find a section on your course's menu named **Legacy Recordings**. This section will simply be there to allow you to view old recordings made with the outdated version of Collaborate Ultra. For everything else you do with Collaborate Ultra, you will use the new version and it will be in a menu area named **Live Meetings**.

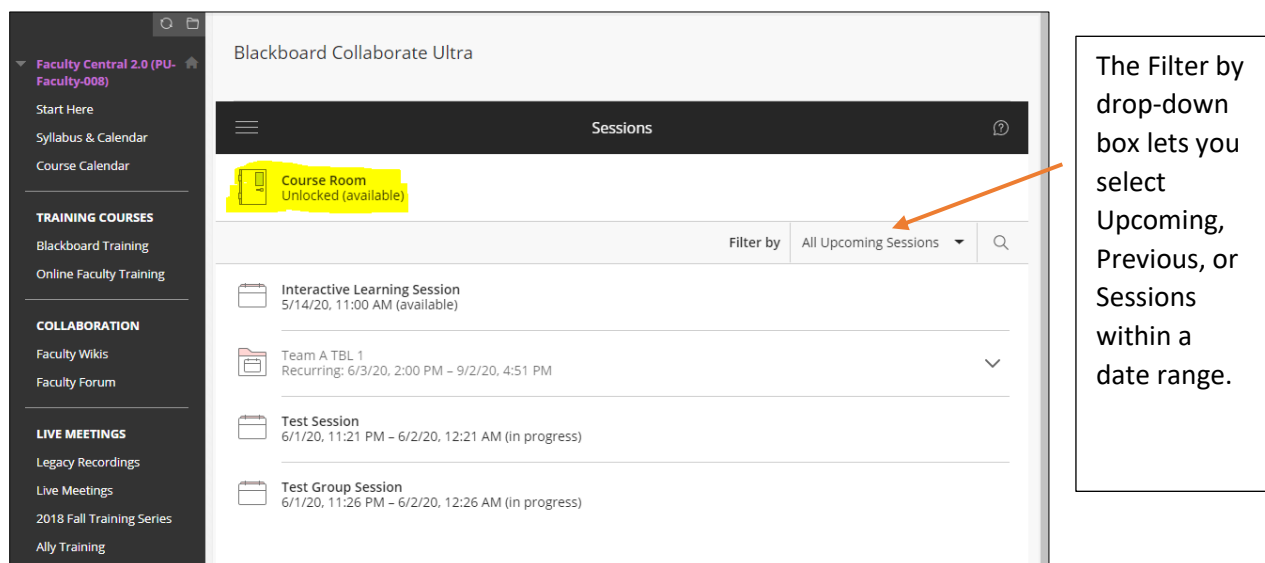
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Here is what it looks like when you first enter the new Collaborate Scheduler:

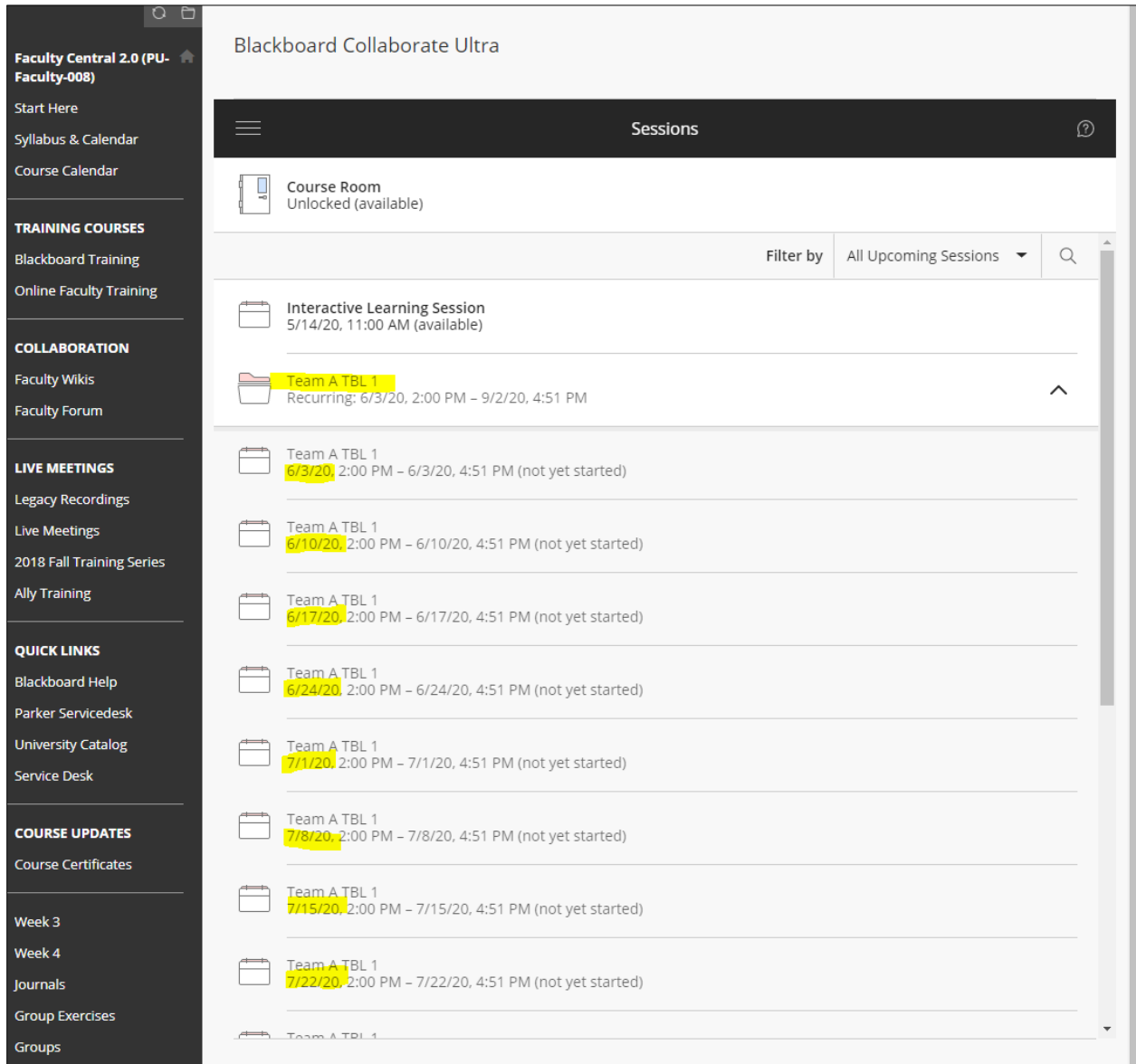


In the image above, the Collaborate Scheduler shows that no sessions have been scheduled yet. However, the Course Room is unlocked. To enter it, simply click on the icon and then you will be able to enter the session.

Here is what the Collaborate Scheduler screen looks like with some sessions scheduled:



On the screen above, you can see that four sessions have been scheduled. One of them, “Team A TBL 1,” is a recurring session. If you click on the arrow to the right of the session name, it will show you the dates and times of all the scheduled recurrences, as follows:



The screenshot shows the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra interface. On the left is a navigation sidebar with categories like Faculty Central 2.0, TRAINING COURSES, COLLABORATION, LIVE MEETINGS, QUICK LINKS, and COURSE UPDATES. The main content area is titled 'Sessions' and shows a list of sessions. The first session is 'Interactive Learning Session' on 5/14/20. Below it is a recurring session 'Team A TBL 1' with a recurrence of 6/3/20, 2:00 PM – 9/2/20, 4:51 PM. An arrow points to a detailed list of recurrences for 'Team A TBL 1' at 2:00 PM on the following dates: 6/3/20, 6/10/20, 6/17/20, 6/24/20, 7/1/20, 7/8/20, 7/15/20, and 7/22/20. All dates are highlighted in yellow.

These sessions were set to recur weekly, and you can see that each recurrence is exactly one week apart. Your instructor can choose different recurrence intervals, based on the needs of the course.

Scheduling Sessions

Ad Hoc Sessions

Your instructor may ask you to join an “ad hoc” or unscheduled session. To join an ad hoc session, simply enter the Course Room at any time. As long as it is unlocked, you will be able to enter it. Simply click on the Course Room icon to enter and join the session.

Group/Concurrent Sessions in the New Collaborate Ultra

The new Collaborate Ultra allows concurrent sessions within any course. There are three types of group/concurrent sessions available:

- Breakout Groups
- Concurrent Sessions
- Collaborate Ultra Used in Course Groups

Breakout Groups

Breakout Groups in the New Collaborate Ultra work identically to the way they work in the existing Collaborate Ultra.

Concurrent Sessions

Your instructor might schedule as one or more concurrent sessions to take place at the same and/or overlapping times.

- These sessions might have meaningful names such as, “Lab Team 1,” “TBL Group A,” “Study Group 6,” “Peer Review Group 4,” etc.
- Alternately, they could have topic-based names, such as, “Mammals,” “Invertebrates,” “Single-Cell Organisms,” etc.

Collaborate Ultra Used in Course Groups

If your instructor is using Course Groups in your class, they have the option to make the Collaborate Ultra tool available to groups. There are different options for how instructors might choose to set this up, so please refer to their instructions for what you will be able to do with Collaborate in such groups.

Glossary

Term	Comments
Live Meetings	The new version of Collaborate Ultra that we are migrating to in June. This is the term we are adopting to maintain consistency and minimize confusion.
Legacy Recordings	The new name we will show on course menus for the outdated version of Collaborate Ultra. This will only be used to access old recordings made in the outdated version; other capabilities will be disabled.

Collaborate Scheduler	The scheduling area one sees on first entering the new Collaborate Ultra
Course Room	This is the session area used for ad hoc (i.e., unscheduled) sessions. Your instructor can lock and unlock this area.
Ad Hoc Sessions	These are unscheduled sessions that you can start just by entering the Course Room, as long as it is unlocked.
Scheduled Sessions	These are sessions that have been scheduled in the Collaborate Scheduler. They are listed on the Scheduler page and can be accessed from there or from a course link.
Attendee Roles	These can be Participant (the usual role for students), Presenter , or Moderator . Participants can be promoted by Moderators to Presenter or Moderator status within the session, on the Attendee tab.
Large Scale Session	These are sessions that have more than 250 attendees, up to a total of 500. Some features may be disabled to accommodate the size of the session.
Concurrent Sessions	These are sessions that take place at the same time. Each course can have a large number of concurrent sessions, as long as no session has 250 or more users in it.

Conclusion

We hope you will find the changes to the new Blackboard Collaborate Ultra to be welcome additions. If you need further help, please know that you can always access [Blackboard Help for Students regarding Collaborate Ultra for additional information](#). It includes clear explanations and several short introductory videos that will help you navigate the interface.

If you run into any difficulties while running Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, please access the Collaborate support available within the session, contact the Parker Service Desk at servicedesk@parker.edu, or email the Ask Online team at askonline@parker.edu.