

Web Conferencing in Canvas

Overview: What is Web Conferencing

Web conferencing tools allow individuals to meet online via video and/or audio stream and collaborate by sharing files, presentations, computer screens, and text-based chat. Web Conferencing is similar to Skype, Google Hangout, FaceTime, and WhatsApp, but with additional functionality.

Canvas has a built-in web conferencing tool (BigBlueButton) that allows faculty, instructors, TAs, and students to easily create, invite class members to join, and record web conferencing sessions.

Pedagogical Uses of Web Conferencing

1. **Online Office Hours** - Hold office hours without you and your students being in the same physical location.
2. **Virtual Review Sessions** - Discuss questions with multiple students by writing on a virtual whiteboard, or sharing files or computer screens. Or you can ask students to perform these tasks.
3. **Guest Speaker** - Bring speakers in for your course without needing to worry about funding and traveling logistics. Record the session for review.
4. **Group Collaboration** - Students can collaborate and work on group projects without having to find a physical location to meet.
5. **Online Class Sessions** - Hold interactive lectures via webcam and sharing files or slides. Use polls to gauge student understanding.

Challenges of Meeting Online

- Harder to discern body language, non-verbal cues, and feedback from students.
- Potential increased distraction (environmental, internet).
- Lack of physical presence can sometimes be a barrier to interaction.

Features of a Successful Online Session

How do we know when an online session is successful?

Student Perspective

- “I learned something” from faculty and other students.
- Student satisfaction.

Faculty/Instructor Perspective

- Evidence of students learning.
- Distributed student participation.
- “I learned something” from the students.
- Faculty satisfaction.

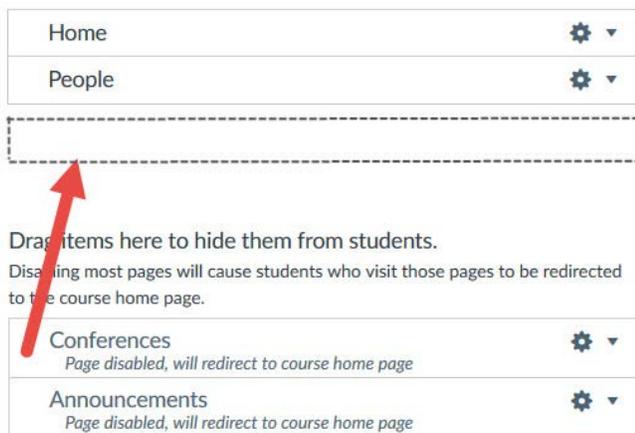
Using Web Conference in Canvas

Enable Conferences for Your Students

By default the **Conferences** link in the Course Navigation Menu is disabled for your students. Enable it to give students access:

1. Go to **Settings** in the Course Navigation Menu on the left.
2. Go to **Navigation** tab at the top.
3. Find the **Conferences** link in the bottom section called, “Drag items here to hide them from students,” and drag it to the top part under, “**Drag and drop items to reorder them in the course navigation.**”

Drag and drop items to reorder them in the course navigation.



Conference Moderator, Presenter, & Participants

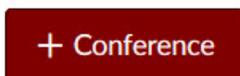
Conference Moderators can change conference settings, grant presenter privilege, clear user status, mute other users, and more. All Teachers and TAs have Conference Moderators privilege in all Conferences they are invited to in a course.

Presenters have control over the presentation and screen-sharing. The Presenter can be the Conference Moderator or anyone designated by the Conference Moderator to present.

Create a Conference

The Conference Index Page (Conferences link in the Course Navigation Menu) allows you to view, create, manage, and edit all the conferences within a course.

1. In the Course Navigation menu, click the **Conferences** link.
2. Click the maroon + **Conference** button at the top right.



 See also: The complete documentation for Conferences: community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10460#jive_content_id_Conferences

There are two excellent short videos that introduce the platform:

Moderator/Presenter Overview; youtu.be/J9mbw00P9W0

Viewer Overview; youtu.be/oh0bEk3YSwl

 **Tip:** The recommended browsers for Web Conferences in Canvas are **Firefox** and **Chrome**.

You will most likely need to grant the latest version of **Adobe Flash** permission. Visit get.adobe.com/flashplayer to download the latest version, if your browser doesn't automatically prompt download or if Flash isn't working properly.

If you want to share your computer screen during the conference, you will need the most recent version of **Java**. Follow the Conferences interface for download instructions.

Conferences are not supported by Canvas mobile apps and mobile browsers that do not support Flash.

 **Tip:** Students can create Conferences in their group homepage if Groups are enabled for them. They cannot create Conference for a course.

3. In the dialog box, fill in the appropriate information:

The screenshot shows a 'New Conference' dialog box with the following elements:

- 1** Name: Mid-Term Online Review Session
- Type: BigBlueButton
- 2** Duration: 60 minutes
- 3** Options:
 - Enable recording for this conference
 - No time limit (for long-running conferences)
- 5** Description: (Empty text area)
- 6** Members:
 - Invite All Course Members

Buttons: Cancel, Update

[1] Provide a descriptive name for the session, e.g. Mid-Term Online Review Session.

[2] Enter the number of minutes of the conference if you want to set a time limit on how long invited members are able to join the conference.

[3] Select the box for “Enable recording for this conference” if you want to enable recording options for this conference. **Recorded sessions are available for 14 days.** If you are not sure whether you need recording or not, enable the option first and start recording the session only if you need it. (See next section.)

[4] Select the box for “No time limit (for long-running conferences)” if you don’t want to set a time limit for the conference.

[5] (Optional) Enter a description of the conference.

[6] To invite everyone in the course to the conference, select **Invite All Course Members** to the conference. To invite specific course members, uncheck the box to see a list of course members and check the boxes for the individual members you wish to invite.

4. Click the **Update** button to save the conference settings.

Buttons: Cancel, Update

Tip: The time limit will begin when the presenter starts the conference. Once the duration has expired, new participants will be unable to join and the conference will continue until the last person leaves the conference room or the conference organizer concludes the conference.

Tip: You can add any user in your course to your conference. However, once a user has been invited, the user cannot be removed from the conference.

Conferences can accommodate up to **50 people**.

Recording Sessions

1. If you want to record your session, be sure to select **Enable recording for this conference** on the Conference Settings page *when you create your conference*.

Edit "Mid-Term Online Review Session" x

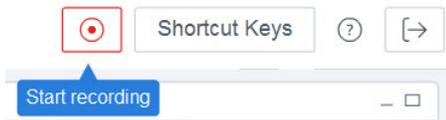
Name

Type

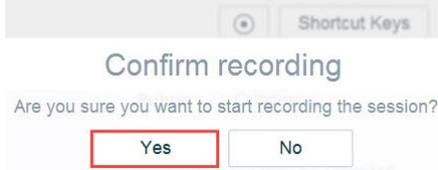
Duration minutes

Options Enable recording for this conference

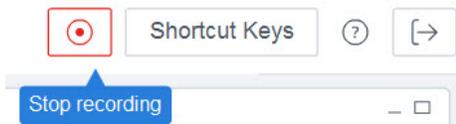
2. Click the maroon **Update** button at the bottom to save your changes.
3. When you start the meeting, you will see a **Record Conference** button on the **Video Conference Tool** panel. Click the button to start the recording.



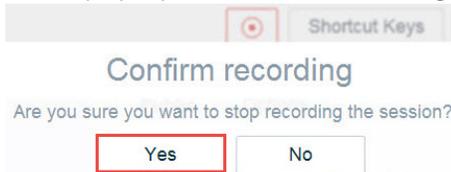
4. In the pop up confirmation message, click **Yes** to start recording.



5. To end session recording, click the **Stop Recording** button.



6. In the pop-up confirmation message, click **Yes** to stop recording.



7. After the conference has concluded, the conference recording can be accessed on the Conference Index page, under **Concluded Conferences**. Click on the conference title to view the recording.

There may be a small delay between the conclusion of the conference and the availability of the recording. A notification is sent to conference participants when the recording is ready.

See also: "How do I record a conference?"
community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10450-4152117864

And the Record Conference section in "How do I use the Conferences interface as a moderator?"
community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10273-415265961

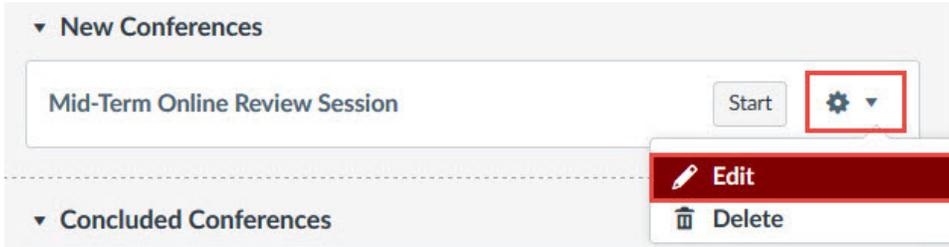
Tip: You can start and stop recording as many times as you want during the conference. After the conference has concluded, the playback file will combine all the recorded segments into a single file.

Conference recordings can be viewed on the Conference Index Page for up to **14 days** and **cannot** be downloaded.

Edit a Conference

To edit the settings of the conference:

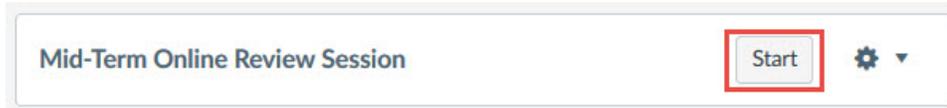
1. On the Conferences page, click the **gear icon** for the conference you want to edit



2. Select **Edit** and follow the steps in the “Create a Conference” section above.

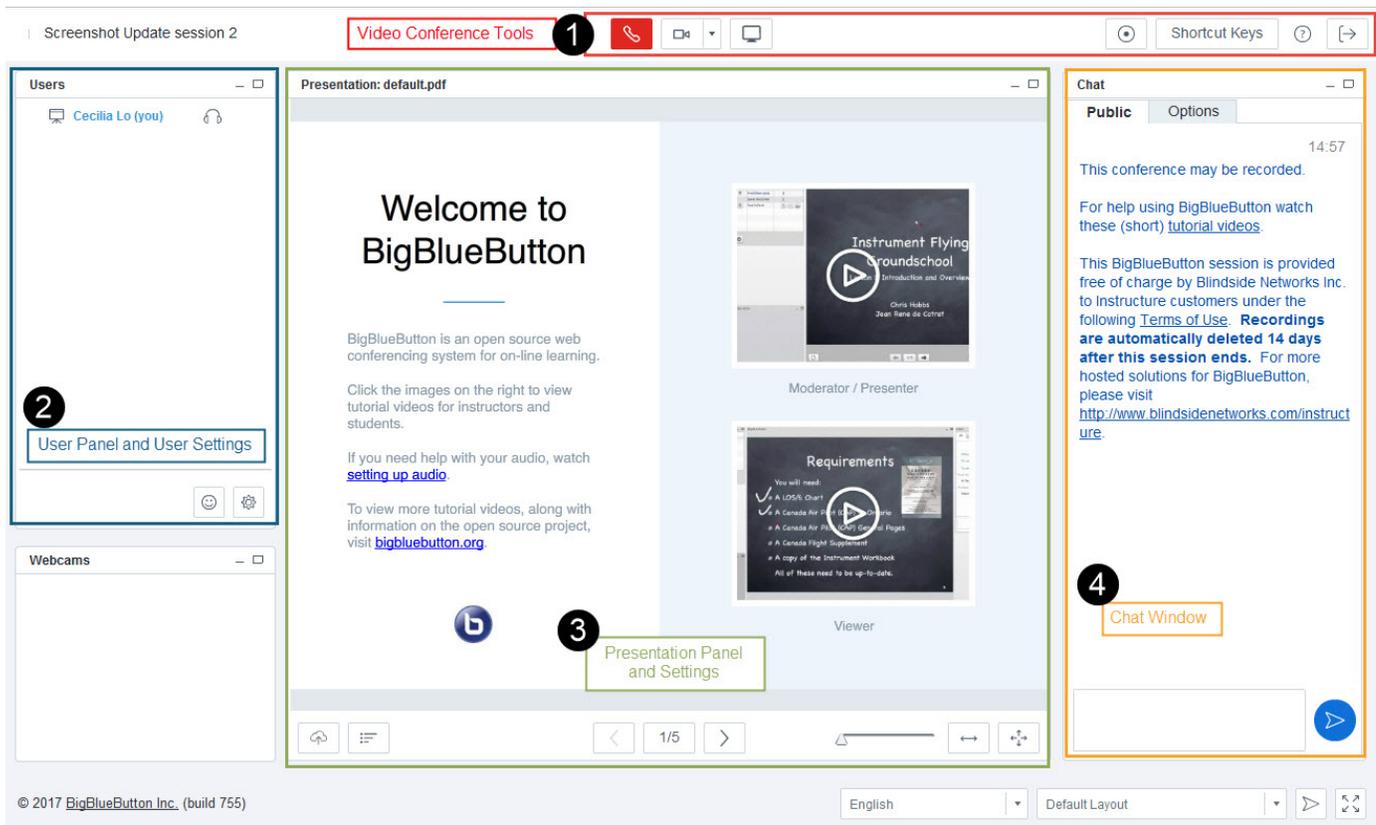
Start a Conference

On the Conference Index Page, find the conference you want to start and click the **Start** button.



Tip: If you have set a time limit for the conference, the time limit will begin when you start the conference. Once the duration has expired, new participants will be unable to join but the conference will continue until the last person leaves the conference room or the conference organizer concludes the conference.

Conference User Interface



[1] At the top (red box) are the **Video Conferencing Tools**. You can share your desktop, adjust your audio settings, use your webcam, mute or unmute yourself, and more here.

[2] On the left (blue box) is the **User Panel and User Settings**. You can see who is in the conference, change presenters, mute a participant's microphone, or kick unruly participants out here.

[3] In the center (green box) is the **Presentation Panel and Settings**, where presenters can upload their presentation slides or use a blank slide as an online whiteboard. Mouse over the panel to see the **Presentation Tools** on the right. These tools allow the presenters to mark up presentation slides.

[4] On the right (yellow box) is the **Chat Window**, where you can chat online via text messages with other conference participants. View the chat history at the top and enter new chat message the in the bottom.

Using the Conferencing Features

Communication: Microphones, Webcams, Chat

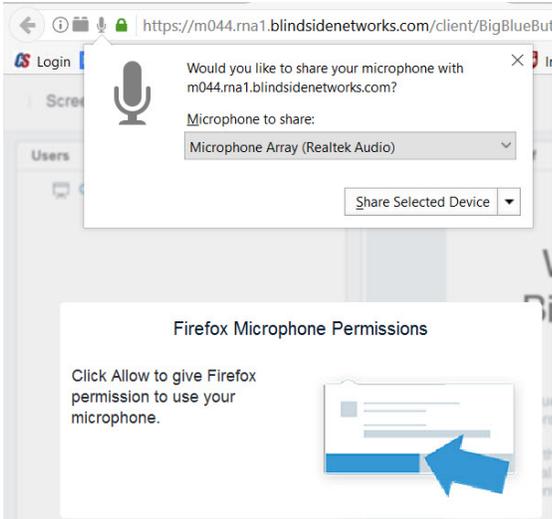
Microphone

1. When you start a conference, the Web Conference will open in a new browser tab or window (depending on your computer's settings).
2. Wait for the interface to load. In the pop-up dialog box, select **Microphone** if you are presenting.

How do you want to join the audio?



3. If prompted, grant permission to share your microphone with the website.

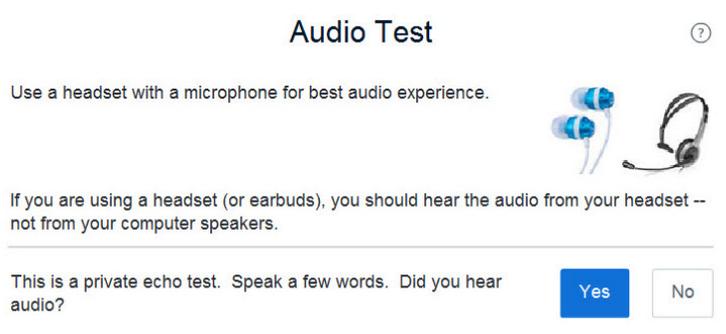


Tip: The new browser tab or window is named BigBlueButton, after the name of the vendor for the conferencing tool.

Tip: You can change your audio, webcam, and screen-sharing options later via the **Video Conferencing Tool menu** at the top.

Tip: If you missed or accidentally closed the prompt, some browsers let you reopen it by clicking on the microphone icon.

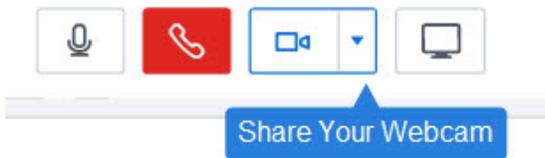
- Follow the instructions on the screen to perform an Audio Test to check that your microphone and audio are working properly.



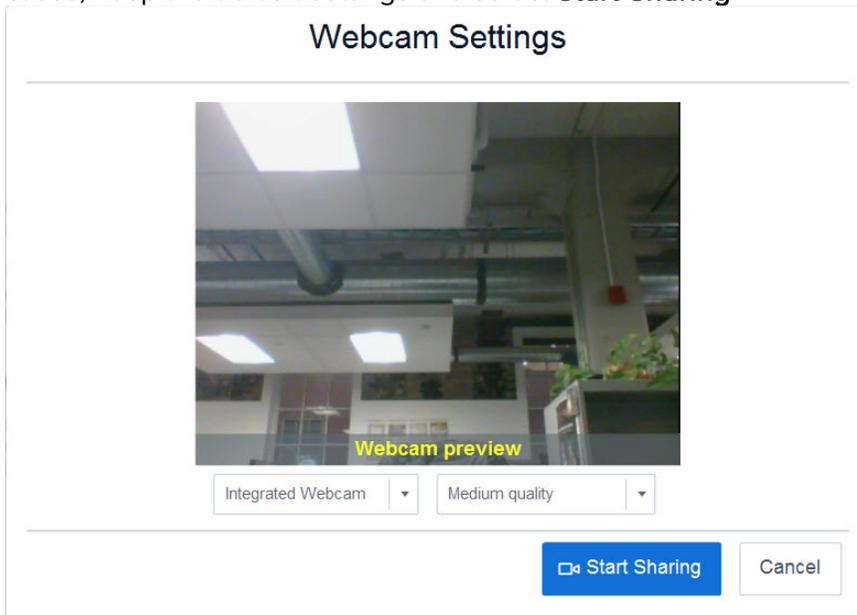
Tip: Use headset with microphone whenever possible. It often provides better audio quality and reduces the chance of audio interference.

Webcam

- To turn the Webcam on or off, select the **Webcam** option on the Video Conference Tools menu at the top center. If you have more than one camera connected to your computer, use the dropdown menu to choose the appropriate camera.



- In the dialog box, you can preview the webcam video stream. In most cases, keep the default settings and select **Start Sharing**.

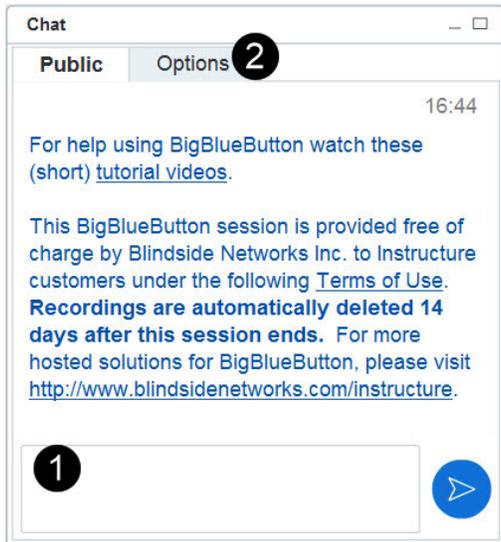


- You should now see your video stream in the bottom right panel.

Tip: Why should you and conference attendees use the webcam? The visual element in video streaming affords an extra level of social presence over audio-only streaming. Instead of listening to disembodied voices, conference participants can now discern facial and gestural cues. This better fosters the social aspect of learning. Further, for those who are non-native speakers or have a minor hearing disability, the ability to see the lips of the speakers can greatly facilitate comprehension.

Chat

- To chat with all conference participants, enter text messages in the **Public** tab of the **Chat Window** [1]. To start a private chat with another participant, click the Options tab [2] and select the name of the participant.



 Definition: Online chat refers to communication over the Internet via real-time transmission of text messages from sender to receiver. Chat messages are generally short and informal in order to enable other participants to respond quickly. For more, see: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_chat

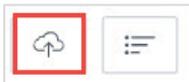
 Tip: Online chat affords an additional means for conference attendees to ask questions and communicate with each other.

Checking on chat messages while presenting can be very taxing. A few solutions include waiting till the end of a section to check, or designating a conference participant to report and consolidate similar questions.

Presentation: Presentation Slides, Whiteboard, and Screen-Sharing

Presentation Slides and Whiteboard

- To upload your own presentation slides, click the **Upload Presentation** button at the bottom left of the Presentation Panel, and then select the appropriate presentation file from your computer. The recommended format is PDF, but Microsoft Office documents (e.g. PowerPoint, Word document) are also accepted.



- At the bottom of the Presentation Panel, Presenters can [1] advance the slides or [2] zoom in/out, and fit their presentation to the width/page.

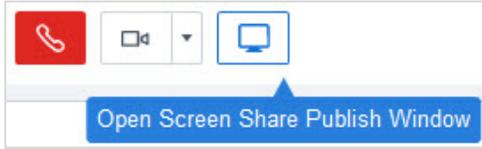


- A **Whiteboard** is a space where the presenter can draw lines and shapes or type text. You can create a whiteboard by uploading a blank slide or use the blank slide provided in the default presentation.
- The Presenter can use **Presentation Tools** to mark up their slides or write on their Whiteboard. Mouse over the Presentation Panel to see the Presentation Tools on the right. Mouse over each tool item to see its description.
- The Presenter can *reuse slides* previously uploaded to the conference. Click the **Upload Presentation** button and select the appropriate presentation.

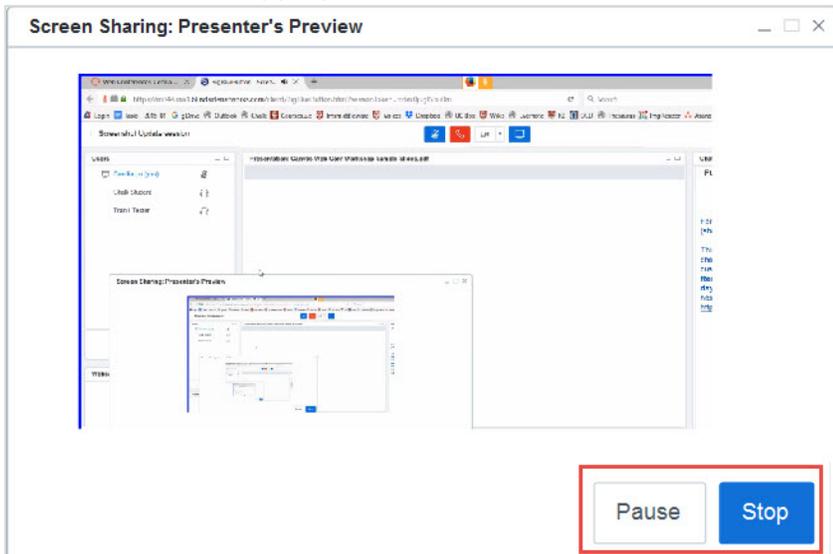
 Tip: Conference participants cannot download the presentation slides. If you want to share a copy of your slides with conference participants, you will need to either make them available in the course content areas in Canvas or send them out directly via Announcement or Inbox messages.

Screen-Sharing

1. To share your computer screen, select the **Open Screen Share Publish Window** option on the Video Conference Tools menu at the top center. If prompted, grant your browser permission to run the Java app “screenshare.jnlp.”



2. In the dropdown menu at the bottom of the pop-up dialog box, select **Full Screen** if you want to share your entire computer screen (i.e. participants will see everything you see on your computer), or a specific **Region** of your screen.
3. Click **Start**. You will see a blue-colored frame around the region of your shared screen. A Presenter’s Preview dialog box will also pop-up. You can minimize the window if it is in your way.
4. To **Pause** or **Stop** screen sharing, go to the Presenter Preview dialog box and select the appropriate button.



Tip: To share your computer screen, you will need the most recent version of **Java**. Follow the Conferences interface for download instructions.

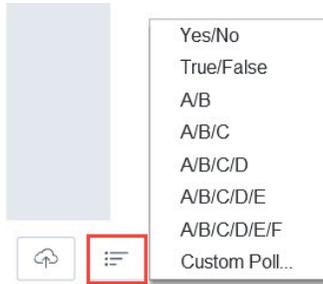
Tip: Sharing a select Region of your computer screen works best if you have multiple screens or a large computer screen. The shared Region is a fixed part of your screen even if you move to a different application window.

Engagement: Polls, Status, Alternative Presenters/Leaders

Polls

You can use Polls to obtain anonymous feedback from students. The conferencing tool supports Yes/No, True/False, and multiple choice (up to 6 options) questions and will tally the answers automatically. There are two ways to create a poll question.

1. **Manually create poll questions** by clicking the **Start a Poll** button at the bottom of the Presentation Panel.



Select the appropriate **question type**, enter the poll options, and click the **Start** button to start the poll.

2. **Polls can be created automatically** if your presentation slides include poll questions. Conferences will read the slide and automatically include the choices in the poll that match the presentation. Three slide layouts are readable by the conferencing tool:
 - i. Slides with yes or no generate a Yes/No poll.
 - ii. Slides with true or false generate a True/False poll.
 - iii. Slides with answers A–F generate a letter poll with the same number of options (shown as A–F).

What ed tech have you used?

A. Word processing program

B. Learning management system (e.g. Chalk, Canvas)

C. Blogs or Wikis

D. Online collaborative tools (e.g. Google doc, Drive)

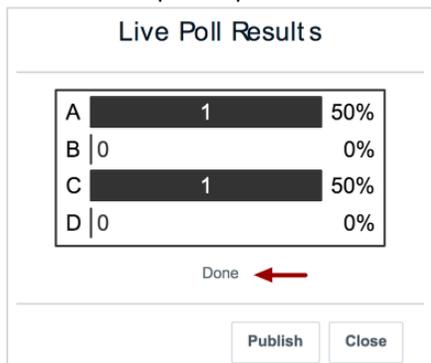
E. Online discussion board

F. Social Media

Click the **poll type button** at the bottom to start the poll.



3. Once you have started the poll, the Live Poll Result window will pop up. You can see the number of responses over the total number of conference participants at the bottom.

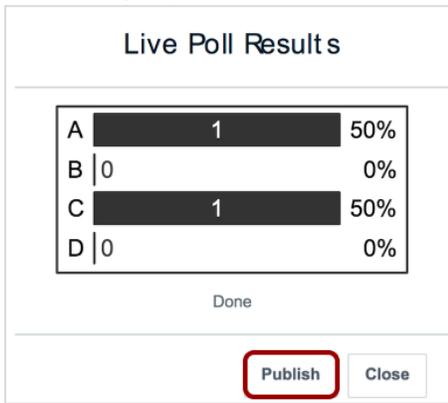


 See also: “How do I automatically create a poll using a presentation in a conference as a presenter?”
community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10426-4152448105

 Tip: It is recommended you upload PDF version of your slides if you want to create a poll automatically.

 Tip: If Conferences failed to read your poll or applied the wrong question type, you will need to create the poll manually.

4. To end a poll, click the **Publish** button.

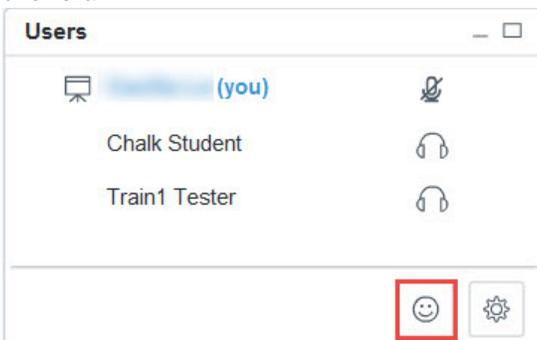


Tip: If you use presentation slides, the poll results are published on the bottom right corner of the slide where the poll is created. If you have more than one poll on a slide, only the latest result is displayed.

Participant Status

Presenters can gauge participants' needs or feelings by asking them to update their status to one of the following: Raise hand, Happy, Neutral, Sad, Confused, Away, Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down, and Applause. These status are public and can be viewed by everyone in the Conference.

1. To set your Status, click on the **Smiley-Face** icon in the User Panel on the left.



Tip: Participation Status is a good way to gauge how participants are following along. Consider instructing participants to update their status throughout the duration of the Conference and solicit specific questions if you start seeing Confused status.

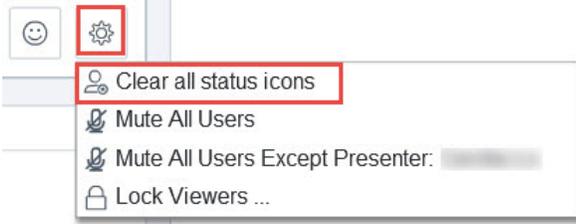
Don't forget to clear status at the beginning of a new section/topic so that you know the participants are responding to what's going on at a particular moment.

2. Then click on the appropriate status icon.



3. To clear or change your own status, click on the **Smiley-Face** icon in the User Panel on the left. Then click the **Clear** button in the pop-up option menu.

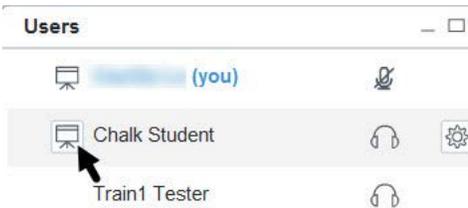
- The Conference Moderator can clear all conference participants' status by clicking on the **gear icon**, then select **Clear all status icons**.



Alternative Presenters

Conference Moderators can make another participant be the presenter:

- Mouse over the participant's **Status** column in the User Panel.
- Select the **Presentation** icon.



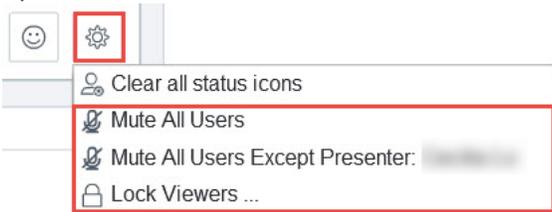
Tip: Asking conference participants to present can be a good way to engage them and keep them actively participating. Be sure to ask other participants to respond, comment, or ask questions about the presentation to assess their comprehension and engagement.

Other Functions: Manage User, Interface Layout

Control Conference Environment

Conference Moderators can mute all users and restrict certain conference features from being used.

- In the User Panel, click the **gear icon** and select the appropriate option.



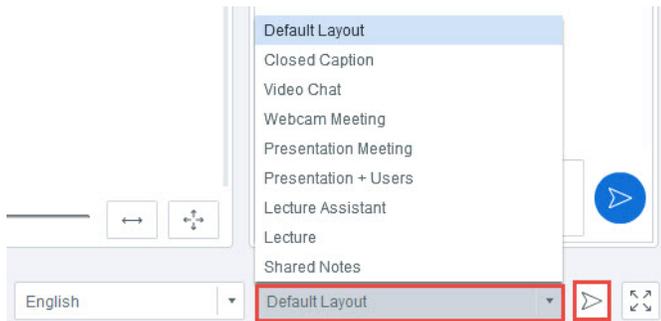
- If you choose Lock Viewers, [1] select the feature you want to lock and prevent conference participants from using. [2] Click **Apply** to save your settings.

Lock Viewers

Feature	Locked
Webcam	<input type="checkbox"/>
Microphone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Chat	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private Chat	<input type="checkbox"/>
Layout	<input type="checkbox"/>

Interface Layout

Each user can select his or her own layout by choosing from the Layout dropdown menu at the bottom right of the conference interface. The Conference moderator can apply a layout to all users by clicking the arrow button.



The options are:

- **Default Layout:** displays the Users, Webcams, Presentation, and Chat windows.
- **Closed Caption:** displays the Users, Webcams, Presentation, Closed Caption, and Chat windows (learn how to manage Closed Captioning).
- **Video Chat:** Displays the Webcams window.
- **Webcam Meeting:** Displays the Webcams, Chat, and Presentation windows.
- **Presentation Meeting:** Displays the Presentation, Chat, and Webcams windows.
- **Lecture Assistant:** Displays the Users, Chat, Presentation, and Webcams windows.
- **Lecture:** Displays the Presentation windows.

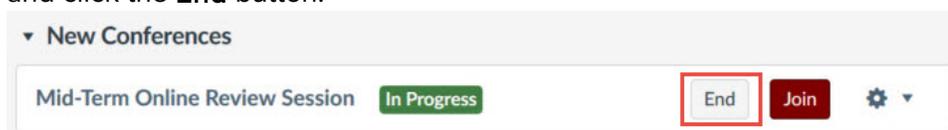
Captioning

If you are holding web conferences for a Registrar course and need captioning services, contact Student Disability Services (disabilities.uchicago.edu, 773-702-6000, disabilities@uchicago.edu) well in advance of the scheduled conference to arrange for a stenographer. You will most likely need to obtain the email address for the stenographer, add them to the course, and invite them to the conference. You might also need to help conference attendees use the Closed Caption layout. If you need in-class support, email canvas@uchicago.edu to set up an individual consultation.

See also: “How do I create live captioning in a conference as a moderator?”
community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-9922-4152627526

Conclude a Conference

On the Conference Index Page, find the conference you want to conclude and click the **End** button.



Tips

Technical Set Up

1. **Try it out ahead of time** (at least a day before) with ATS staff/ or a TA or colleague to make sure the technology works so that you have time to get technical help if necessary, and especially if this is one of your first few times using web conferencing tools.
 - a. Make sure your **hardware** (mic, sound, webcam) works.
 - b. Make sure your **software** (computer operating system, browser, required browser plug-ins, including Java, and Flash) are up-to-date.
 - c. Ideally, test run in the room you are going to use for the actual online session to check for other environmental factors, such as **internet access**.
2. **Use headphones and microphones** if you have them. Never enable audio/video in more than one computer in the same room unless headsets with microphones are being used. Otherwise the audio from the computers will create interference.
3. **Mute other viewers' audio** to reduce background noise or feedback if necessary.
4. If you are using the computer's audio systems, many browsers will ask you to **grant permission** for the sessions. Be sure to look out for prompts and allow the conferencing site to gain access to your audio system.

 See also: “**Ten Tips for Hosting a Web Meeting**”
www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-with-technology-articles/ten-tips-for-hosting-a-web-meeting/

Preparation, Engagement, and Recording the Session

1. **Get ready and log in early.** Give yourself ample time to install any last-minute software updates and upload files and slide presentations.
2. If you will be using a webcam, make sure you are comfortable with the **room background** you show to session participants.
3. Ask **students to take turns leading** the sessions. Let them use the whiteboard to help illustrate their points.
4. Use **polls** to engage students.
5. **Use webcams** and encourage your students to use webcams to increase their virtual presence.
6. If you are using only audio, don't forget to still use **facial expressions**. Facial expression affects the tone of voice.
7. Use **chat** to collect questions and responses.
8. **Record sessions** for review as appropriate. Session recordings are available for **14 days**.

 See also: “**Hearing a Smile in Tone of Voice**”
www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=18255131