Starting a web conference in Courseworks (Canvas)

BigBlueButton (BBB) is a web conferencing tool available within to all instructors using Courseworks (Canvas). Depending on if you’ve used BBB before, it may or may already be activated for your course within Canvas. In this short tutorial we’ll walk you through the steps to activating and using BigBlueButton to set up an online web conference in your course.

Activating the BigBlueButton Tool

BigBlueButton is available through your individual course sites on Courseworks. You can find this through the link item named “Conferences” on the side menu of your course. To make this link available to everyone in the course you will need to make sure that tool is activated. If it has not been activated it will show as greyed out. Even if the tool is greyed out, as an instructor in the course you will be able to click on it but students and other class participants will not. Activate the Conferences tool by going to Settings>Navigation and dragging and dropping that item up the top section of available tools. See Figure 1.1. and Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.1
Once you have moved the tool “Conferences” up to the top with other active tools you can scroll to the bottom of the page and hit “Save.” You will then see Conferences is no longer greyed out on the side menu.

**Setting up a BBB Web Conference**

Once the Conference tool has been activated you will want to go to the Conferences page and schedule a conference. Click on the Conferences tool on the side menu. To schedule a new
Conference go to the blue “+Conference” button in the upper right of this screen. You will see a pop up to add details. See Figure 2.1

![Conference pop-up](image)

In the pop up box in Figure 2.1 above, fill in the information for your conference.

- Give your conference a name. Since you may end up with a list of multiples conferences you may want to use the date, class session or particular topic.
- Choose the duration of your meeting. The default is 60 minutes but you can go higher. If you leave the default of 60 minutes your meeting will not end at that point.
- Decide if you want to have the conference recorded – this will record all audio, video, chat and presentations. Once the recording has been processed you will be sent a link. No one else will have access to the recording unless you share that information.
- Members: If you want everyone enrolled in your course to receive an invitation, leave “Invite All Course Members.” This will send the conference info to all members of the course, including students, any TAs or course auditors. If you prefer you can do this manually by unchecking the box and inviting particular members. You also have the option to receive a link once the conference is open to invite anyone outside the course.
- Once you have all the information filled in click Update and your conference will be scheduled and available under “New Conferences” see Figure 2.2.
Starting your web conference

Once you have scheduled your conference you can begin the conference any time by going to “New Conferences” and choosing the Start option on the appropriate conference. When you open your conference, depending on your PC’s settings you maybe need to allow your browser to use Flash – double click the Flash icon and allow either one time or any time from this application. You will then see your meeting load. The first thing you will see is a pop up asking how you would like to join the audio. Your options are Microphone or Listen Only (Figure 3.1). As an instructor and/or presenter you will want to choose Microphone. As a student, they can choose to listen only.

You will again be prompted to allow Flash to access your microphone and/or camera. In the pop up click “Allow” (Figure 3.2). You can choose to turn on and off your webcam and microphone after this. Follow the steps to choose and test your microphone and webcam. This will also test your speakers to ensure sound is routed properly and you can hear any other presenters.
Figure 3.1

Figure 3.2
When you’ve connected your audio and/or video you will see the BigBlueButton conference layout. By default, you will see links to further tutorials to guide you through using some of the tools available within the meeting. On the right of the page you will also see information to invite any other guests as well as a number of guests can use to join by phone if they do not have access to audio through their PC. Figure 3.3.

Available Web Conference Tools

- Microphone controls: Turn on or disable audio (Figure 4.1)
- Webcam controls: Turn on or disable your webcam. (Figure 4.2)
- Screen Sharing option: You can use this button to share your screen. (Note: You will need to have JAVA installed. (Figure 4.3)
- Presentation upload: Use this tool to upload a presentation (PPTX or PDF). This will open the presentation on the main window and you can control the slideshow. (Figure 4.4)
- Chat function: All members of the meeting can have a live text chat. You can also private message attendees. (Figure 4.5)
• Log Out: Here is where you will leave the meeting. As an instructor you will also be given the option to end the meeting for everyone. (Figure 4.6)
Please contact SIPA AV at SIPAAV@SIPA.COLUMBIA.EDU or call the SIPA IT Helpdesk at 212-854-0112 if you have any questions.