Virtual Office Hours Using Collaborate Ultra

Much like face-to-face office hours, where you meet privately with your students one-on-one while other students wait in the lobby, you can utilize Blackboard Collaborate Ultra to create a similar scenario. To do this, you will either direct students to click directly on the Course Room or you can create a specific session. Regardless of the option you choose, the steps will essentially remain the same, but for the purpose of this tutorial we will focus on the “Create Session” option.

1. To create a session, click “Create Session”.

![Image of Collaborate Ultra interface with Create Session button highlighted]
2. Create a name for your session and indicate the “Start” and “End” times. To restrict access to individuals within the course, make sure the “Guest access” box remains unchecked. All other settings can remain set to default. Click “Save”.

![Session Settings](image)
3. Once your session is created, it will appear beneath the general “Course Room”. When you’re ready, you can enter the scheduled session by selecting the ellipsis menu on the right and selecting “Join Session”.

4. Once you are logged into the Collaborate session, select the purple tab in the lower right to access menu options.
5. Once you’re accessed the menu options, select “Share Content” and click on “Breakout Groups”.
6. In the drop-down menu, select “Custom Assignment”.

7. Make sure the “Allow Attendees to Switch Groups” option remains unchecked and delete “Group 2”. Then click “Start”.

![Image of Breakout Groups screen with custom assignment selected and Allow Attendees to Switch Groups unchecked, and Group 2 deleted. The Start button is highlighted.](image-url)
8. At this point, “Group 1” functions as your office and the “Main Room” becomes a lobby or waiting area for students logging into the session. To move students into your office, select the ellipsis next to the student’s name you wish to move and click on “Group 1”. You may also click and drag a student into “Group 1”, if you prefer.
9. Once you have successfully moved the student you wish to meet with from the “Main Room” to “Group 1”, click “Start”. Note: in consideration of student privacy, “Group 1” should only have one member in it at a time.
10. As Moderator, you now have the ability to toggle between the “Main Room” and “Group 1”. To meet with the student in “Group 1”, select the icon that indicates “Join: Group 1”. Blackboard Collaborate will automatically reconnect your audio and video settings specifically to “Group 1”.

![Image of Breakout Groups interface]
11. You can now see that the Moderator and one Participant are in “Group 1” while the remaining Participants are waiting in the “Main Room.”
12. If at any time you need to communicate with the students in the “Main Room” while you are still working with the student in “Group 1”, note that you are able to use the chat function for this purpose. To chat with students in the “Main Room”, simply click on the chat icon and select “Everyone”. You can also chat exclusively with the student in “Group 1”, if need be.
13. When you are finished meeting the student in “Group 1”, click on the ellipsis next to their name and select “Remove from session”. Alternatively, you may also move the student back to the “Main Room” by selecting “Move to another group” or the student may simply leave the session on their own. Regardless, make sure that “Group 1” has zero participants before moving the next student over from the “Main Room”.

![Diagram showing the Breakout Groups interface with options to remove a student from a session or move them to another group.](image-url)