

A Comparison of Web Conference Tools for Active Online Teaching

There are now a range of institutionally-supported web conferencing tools available for us to use in our work. This resource will help you to select a platform suitable for your learning and teaching needs.

	BigBlueButton (Canvas)	Microsoft Teams Meetings	Microsoft Teams Live Events	Zoom
In brief	BigBlueButton is a web conferencing tool that is embedded into Canvas, ready to use within the Conferences area of courses. It has nice teaching features and is simple to use, however our current institutional license limits its scalability. To get started go to BigBlueButton Tutorial Videos	Meetings in Teams include audio, video, and screen sharing, and are one of the key communication tools in Microsoft Teams, which is itself a rich collaboration platform. A good option for both internal and external communication. To get started go to Scheduling a live online session or meeting using Microsoft Teams	Teams Live Events is an extension of Teams meetings, enabling users to broadcast video and meeting content to a large online audience. The host of the event delivers the presentation and audience participation is limited to viewing the content shared. To get started go to Get started with Microsoft Teams live events	An established business and consumer web conferencing platform, with an extensive and well developed list of features that compliment it as a high-quality and reliable video conferencing platform for both internal and external communication. To get started go to How do I log in to Zoom?
Maximum number of participants	100 (but ten concurrent meetings at the university)	250	1000	300
Maximum number of Webcam	16	49	9	50
Accessibility features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BigBlueButton Accessibility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accessibility support for Microsoft Teams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accessibility support for Microsoft Teams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoom Accessibility Features
Automatic Captioning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoom Using Closed Captioning
Recording of meetings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Student can initiate their own meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ability to mute participants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Waiting room / lobby	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Varied participant roles and ability to promote (host, co-host, panellist, presenter, attendee, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Polling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
'Raise hands' feature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative Whiteboard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Breakout rooms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Coming soon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative Notetaking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Where you are using a web browser to access these platforms, we recommend you to use an up to date browser such as Chrome, Firefox or Safari.
Doing something innovative with your web conferencing that you think others would like to hear about? Please email us at cie@liverpool.ac.uk.

