Collaborate, Panopto, and Teams Platform Comparison – Functionality & Scenarios for Use

Introduction

Edge Hill University supports three systems which provide different capabilities and functionality to facilitate a variety of scenarios for live and recorded online lectures, seminars and meetings, assessments, or events which use audio and video. This comparison will help you identify the best tool for your purposes, but please contact ltdsupport@edgehill.ac.uk should you have any further questions or wish to discuss in more detail.

Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Collaborate Ultra is a real time video conferencing tool in which you can present, discuss and work on shared content. Each course area in Blackboard has a dedicated Collaborate room, and you can schedule sessions in advance. There is the option to use a guest link so that externals can be invited, and you can record any Collaborate session for those who need to catch up or review.

Panopto

Panopto is a video and lecture capture and sharing platform, as well as having the capability to live stream. Each Blackboard area can be provisioned to link to its own Panopto folder where content can be recorded and stored, while recordings can also be embedded into the course pages. The live streaming functionality can provide a one-way stream for a live event.

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams, included with Office 365, is a collaboration platform that enables easy communication between staff and students. Microsoft Teams can be used to schedule online meetings, where you can present (utilising video and screen sharing tools) and engage in online meetings/sessions (via chat). You may also schedule a Teams Meeting directly in your Outlook Calendar. Online meetings can be recorded for those who need to catch up or review. You do not need a full Microsoft Team set up by IT Services in order to schedule Teams Meetings (note that externals would not have access to a full Microsoft Teams area).

How many attendees or participants?

This will determine whether all or some of the platforms are suitable for your purposes.

Blackboard Collaborate default limit is 250 participants, but this can be up to 500 if a large-scale session is enabled beforehand.

Panopto live stream provides a one-way stream for up to 10,000 connections.

MS Teams currently has a limit of 300 participants for meetings, but the 'Live Events' function can have 10,000 participants.

For the latest official support and feature information you may also consult Collaborate Help, Microsoft Teams Support or Panopto Help.

Functionality – What can each platform do?

Set-Up & Access Information	Blackboard Collaborate	Panopto	Microsoft Teams
Number of Participants	Up to 250 (up to 500 possible)	Live stream to up to 10,000 (one-way communication only)	300 ('live events' allows up to 10,000)
Guest Speaker or external participant (no EHU account)	Yes – using guest link option. They enter as a Participant but you can change role to Presenter once joined.	Viewing permission is possible for externals. Presenting/creating if enrolled on Blackboard (therefore requires official external account).	Yes – copy the link for the scheduled Outlook meeting and they can then join via browser with the same access as an Attendee.
Lobby/Waiting Room	Entry can be more controlled using a password	No, but only viewable by those enrolled on Blackboard course *(Yes, for live webcasts, but only viewable by permissions set on the webcast e.g. course, site-wide, public)*	Yes
Blackboard Course Integration	Yes – per course	Yes – per course	Yes, basic Teams Meeting Set Up – per course. N.B. not integrated with Outlook calendar.
Outlook Calendar integration	No	No	Yes

Collaborative & Communication Features	Blackboard Collaborate	Panopto	Microsoft Teams
Breakout Rooms	Yes	No	Yes
Chat Function	Optional	Yes – viewers to the host during live webcast. Recorded content includes a discussion.	Yes
Virtually Raise Hand	Yes	No	Yes

Collaborative & Communication Features	Blackboard Collaborate	Panopto	Microsoft Teams
Whiteboard option	Yes	No	Yes
Polling function (a 3rd party option such as Vevox could be used too)	Yes	Not during live webcast, but can add quiz to recorded content.	Yes (Microsoft Forms – creation of Forms is only available to staff)
Video Sharing	Yes – can be restricted to just Moderators or Presenters	Yes	Yes – you can restrict to just 'Presenters' using 'Meeting Options'
File Transfer to participants	No (files can only be 'shared' to present or collaborate in session)	No	Yes
Screen/application share	Yes	Yes	Yes
Video Background or Blur	No	Yes - on web recorder.	Option for both
Remote Control	No	No	Yes
Dedicated Video Assessment available?	No	Yes – Assignment options in Blackboard	No

Recording, Sharing and Post-Production	Blackboard Collaborate	Panopto	Microsoft Teams
Recording	Yes – but not of Breakout Rooms content	Yes	Yes – Saves to Onedrive or SharePoint. Breakout Room recording possible.
Share the Recording	Yes – through Blackboard course or link share (internal or external)	Yes – through Blackboard course, or wider (internal or external if required)	Yes – internally through OneDrive. External possible via Panopto.
Automatic closed captioning (live)	No	No	Yes
Generate transcript	No – only if uploaded to Panopto.	Yes – editable machine generated captions/transcript.	No – only if uploaded to Panopto.
Editing functionality	No - only if download for editing e.g. in Panopto	Yes	No - could upload mp4 to Panopto.

Scenarios – What do you want to achieve?

These scenarios assume some or all the following:

- Access to PC or Mac with mic or webcam and a good network connection (particularly for live events or uploading large video files).
- Panopto - provisioned Course or Organisation in Blackboard and tutor level access.
- Collaborate – tutor level access to a live Blackboard Course or Organisation.
- Have attended training or reviewed support materials on the preferred platform.

Initial guidance for Panopto or Blackboard and Blackboard Collaborate can be found on the Learning Services Staff Wiki Pages

Lectures or Seminars

Scenario	Recommended Platform	Considerations
I want to **pre-record** an online lecture for later viewing by students.	• Panopto	• Although technically you can do this in Collaborate also, using Panopto takes advantage of its generated captions/transcript and its inbuilt video editor. • If the recording needs to be available to students on more than one module, the lecture will need to be copied and then moved to the other Panopto module folder. • Using adaptive release date settings, you can set a future release date for the lecture • Related follow up activity can be set up in Blackboard. e.g. discussion board, quiz.
I want to live stream to a very large audience, **two-way interaction not required**.	• Panopto	• A Panopto live web stream can be scheduled in a Blackboard course • Panopto Recorder Software required • Note there is a 40 second delay in the stream. • Allows up to 10,000 connections
I want to run a fully online live seminar or lecture for my class in Blackboard – **interaction required**.	• Blackboard Collaborate	• Interactivity in Collaborate enables two-way audio or chat communication, presentation and desktop sharing. • Recordings are automatically stored within the same Blackboard course Collaborate area. • To generate/edit captions, the recording will need to be downloaded and uploaded to Panopto. • Provide students a link to a dummy session to test their access and connection to Collaborate.

Scenario	Recommended Platform	Considerations
I want to **poll** my participants or assign them to **breakout rooms**	• Blackboard Collaborate • Microsoft Teams	Blackboard Collaborate • Enables use of up to 20 breakout rooms (note that recording does not capture breakout room content) • Live polling is built in to Collaborate, while you can integrate a tool like Vevox in the session. Microsoft Teams • Up to 50 breakout rooms can be created. • To use breakout rooms in Teams you need to use the desktop app and update the latest version of the Teams desktop client. You will only also see the option for Breakout Rooms if you are the 'Organiser' of the meeting. • MS Forms can be integrated into a Teams meeting by searching for Microsoft Forms in the chat.
I want an **external speaker** to present and participate in a seminar/lecture.	• Blackboard Collaborate • Microsoft Teams	Blackboard Collaborate • You can provide a guest link for a Collaborate session, for the external person to join. Once in the session, you as the Moderator can change their role to Presenter. Microsoft Teams • With Teams you can copy the join link for Microsoft Teams meetings and provide to an external or you can add them to a meeting as you normally would (just type in their full email address).
I want to incorporate a visualiser in my lecture or seminar	• Panopto • Collaborate • Teams	• Panopto can present a visualiser to the computer as a webcam, and can be selected as a primary or secondary video source. • You cannot switch video sources during recording in Panoptop, you must choose what you wish to record before hitting the record button. • In Teams and Collaborate, you can choose to share the Visualiser at any point in the session.

Meetings and 1 to 1s

Scenario	Recommended Platform	Considerations
I want to have a one-to-one online meeting with a colleague or individual student	• Microsoft Teams	• Sending a calendar invite from Microsoft Teams or Outlook (desktop client and online) allows you to include a Teams meeting link.
I want to offer virtual office hours	• Microsoft Teams • Blackboard Collaborate	• Sending a calendar invite from Outlook online allows you to include a Teams meeting link. You will need to add the students one by one to the meeting invite. • In Collaborate, you can set up a recurring session for a regular time slot. You could include a link to the session in a prominent location in the course.
I want to record an online departmental meeting	• Microsoft Teams	• Sending a calendar invite from Microsoft Teams or Outlook online allows you to include a Teams meeting link. • A link to the recording will be available in the chat window created when the meeting starts (for 7 days at time of writing). After some processing time, it is actually stored in OneDrive or SharePoint if you need to share with attendees or use for notes.
I want to conduct Student recruitment interviews	• Microsoft Teams	• It is more likely that external participants will be more familiar with Microsoft features. • The interviewee can be invited via an Outlook online invite which can include a Teams meeting link. • You can also change the meeting settings (select 'Meeting Options') to add restrictions such as who can share their screen and to create a lobby.

Assessments

Scenario	Recommended Platform	Considerations
I want to record live student **video-based presentations**	• Blackboard Collaborate	• If the presentation needs to be 'live' and recorded then Collaborate is the simplest solution, as the recording is saved automatically to that course area. Note: the link to Collaborate area should remain hidden, otherwise all students in the course could access any session or recording. In this case, send the students the *Guest* link.
I want to record a live student assessed **performance**	• Microsoft Teams • Panopto	• For performance-based content which includes more than one person, Collaborate may not be suitable as it is built to focus on a single speaker at a time • Teams will be more suitable for 'live' activity where multiple speakers are interacting frequently. • Pre-recording and uploading to Panopto is another option, see below.
I want students to **submit video-based assessment** content that they have recorded	• Panopto	• Using Panopto for any pre-recorded video-based submissions is the preferred option as this allows students to submit video files they have created to the relevant Blackboard area. • When set up correctly only the tutor and student can see the video and you can apply a grade directly.

Public Access Events

Scenario	Recommended Platform	Considerations
I want to pre-record a **lecture/event** and publish it for public viewing	• Panopto	• This requires a Blackboard Organisation set up so that the Panopto Team can enable public viewing access to the content within. • Content is recorded within the Organisation or uploaded to its public access folder. The share link or embed option will allow viewing by external viewers. The link can also be incorporated into static media, such as flyers, posters etc. by using QR codes and the like.
I want to live stream to a **large public audience**, for a conference style event	• Panopto • Blackboard Collaborate	• Panopto may be the simplest solution if you are broadcasting a single speaker presentation. • There is around 40 seconds delay with Panopto so if you were using other interactive tools (e.g. voting) with the audience, this might cause problems. • Collaborate would allow for a managed Q&A, just be mindful of attendee limits and the recommendation is to send out pre-event technical/access guidance.
I want to conduct **student recruitment interviews**	• Microsoft Teams	• It is more likely that external participants will be more familiar with Microsoft features. • The interviewee can be invited via an Outlook online invite which can include a Teams meeting link. • You can also change the meeting settings (select Meeting Options) to add restrictions and to create a lobby.