

# Quick Guide Moodle and Collaborate



August 2015

Distance Learning and Continuing Education  
166 Bedford Highway  
902-457-6511  
[Msvu.ca/distance](http://Msvu.ca/distance)

## Moodle and Collaborate

Moodle is the Mount's Learning Management System (LMS), which serves as the primary "site" for distance courses. Moodle is available to all Mount faculty for posting course content and keeping in touch with their students.

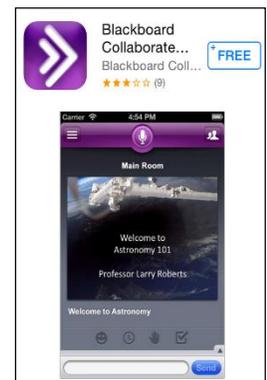
Blackboard Collaborate facilitates real-time communication and recording of online classes, seminars, and presentations. Collaborate is also handy for online office hours, engaging guest speakers in classes, holding meetings with colleagues in various locations, and more. Your experience using Moodle and Collaborate can vary depending on the device you are using, how you are connecting and the type of content you are accessing. This pamphlet provides a quick overview to get you started, however, more detailed information can be found on the student and faculty resource sites at [msvu.ca/moodle](http://msvu.ca/moodle).

## Device Type

To experience the full functionality of both Moodle and Collaborate, use a reasonable internet connection and a MAC or a PC computer with the minimum specifications as outlined at [msuv.ca/moodle](http://msuv.ca/moodle).

Moodle and Collaborate can be accessed from smartphones and tablets, but full functionality may not be available on all device types. The Collaborate app is available for free from the Google Play Store and iTunes, and will be required for many mobile devices.

It is not recommended to rely solely on tablets or smartphones for access to Moodle and Collaborate, especially for tests and examinations.



## Connectivity

Internet connection speed can affect faculty and student experiences with Moodle and Collaborate:

- Using Mount classroom computers or plugging into a wired network connection on campus typically provides sufficient internet access speeds for a good user experience.
- Using free WIFI in public areas, dial up, or your smartphone 2G/3G/LTE connection may provide less than optimal connection speeds, resulting in slow navigation in Moodle webpages and disrupted Collaborate sessions. WIFI will typically provide a better experience than 2G/3G/LTE.
- Moving in a car/bus and using your smartphone for internet access typically reduces connection speed versus being stationary. Faculty should advise students to use the best available internet access for optimal experiences.

**Note:** Collaborate requires you to explicitly set the connectivity type you are using. If you do not do this, Collaborate will assume you are on the highest internet connection speed and may deliver more content than your connection can handle.

### Set Your Connection Speed

PC: Edit → Preferences → Session → Connection

MAC: Blackboard Collaborate → Preferences → Session → Connection

### Configure Your Audio

From the Tools menu, click Audio → Audio Setup Wizard



## Browsers

Browser choice is personal and most of us will have a preferred browser. Not all software behaves the same across the different browsers or even within different versions of a browser. The recommended browsers for Moodle and Collaborate are shown in the reminders table on the next page.

## File Size

The size of your files can determine whether they can be uploaded and whether they will be easily accessed by students using mobile devices. We suggest you stay within the recommended parameters.

- Files for Moodle - Please limit uploading resource files to under 5MB/upload.  
*Tip - Convert PowerPoint files to PDF format using the minimum size optimization option.*
- Files for Collaborate - When uploading a presentation to the whiteboard area, the recommended maximum file size of a PowerPoint is 20MB.  
*Tips - Split the PowerPoint file into two or more files if the presentation contains more than 40 slides. To minimize the file size of a PowerPoint, change images to GIF or JPEG format.*

### Determine the Size of Your File:

PC: Right click on a file name → Properties → look for "size" label

MAC: Click on the "List View" button at the top of the opened window → look for "size" column

## File Types

Although most types of files can be uploaded and accessed in Moodle, it is important to recognize that many mobile devices do not have the proper viewing software to open the files. To provide students with the best user experiences, faculty can:

- Reduce file sizes (read the “files size” section for more details).
- Convert Word, Excel and PowerPoint files to PDFs using the minimum size optimization option.
- Avoid uploading video and audio files into Moodle, and link to them instead. Contact [online@msvu.ca](mailto:online@msvu.ca) to get a private link for your video on VIMEO.

Optimize for:  Standard (publishing online and printing)  
 Minimum size (publishing online)

The Collaborate whiteboard feature allows faculty to upload and share PowerPoint and image files, but it is not optimized for other file types.

- Use the “Application Sharing” feature to share Word, Excel, PDF, Minitab and Webpages.
- Use the “Web Tour” feature to share video and audio files. Please note that the Web Tour feature may not be available on mobile devices.

## Reminders

| Device or File Type |   |                       |   |                    |   |               |   |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------|---|--------------------|---|---------------|---|
| Desktop             | ✓ | Laptop                | ✓ | Tablet             | ! | Phone         | ! |
| Connectivity        |   |                       |   |                    |   |               |   |
| DSL                 | ✓ | Broadband             | ✓ | Wireless           | ! | Dial-up       | ! |
| Browser             |   |                       |   |                    |   |               |   |
| Firefox             | ✓ | IE                    | ! | Chrome             | ! | Safari        | ! |
| File Size           |   |                       |   |                    |   |               |   |
| <5mb                | ✓ | <20mb                 | ! | 20mb               | ! | >20mb         | ✗ |
| File Type*          |   |                       |   |                    |   |               |   |
| PDF                 | ✓ | Excel                 | ! | Word               | ! | PowerPoint    | ! |
| Video & Audio       |   |                       |   |                    |   |               |   |
| Link to VIMEO       | ✓ | Link to an FTP server | ! | Uploaded to Moodle | ✗ | In PowerPoint | ✗ |

✓ - Provides the most reliable experience

! - May not provide all features reliably

✗ - Not recommended

\* Users need to have the correct software in order to be able to open many files.

## Training and Technical Support

Distance Learning and Continuing Education provides full training and technical support to students and faculty who use Moodle and Collaborate, for online and on-campus course delivery.

### Training Services

The Mount's online learning tools, Moodle and Blackboard Collaborate are available to all part-time and full-time members of faculty for teaching online courses and for enriching learning and out-of-class communication in classroom courses.

Distance Learning and Continuing Education offers group and individual training for new and current users of Moodle and Collaborate. Faculty are encouraged to request in-person training sessions before the beginning of each term, and to attend more than one group session until you are comfortable using the tools.

If you will be teaching an online course for the first time, you are encouraged to schedule an individual training session(s) so you will be ready to begin the term with confidence.

To receive an individual training session or to participate in a group training event, please contact [online@msvu.ca](mailto:online@msvu.ca).

### Assistance with Moodle and Collaborate

If you are experiencing difficulties with Moodle or Collaborate, please submit a help ticket or phone Distance Learning and Continuing Education for support during normal business hours as follows:

- Submit a [Student Help Ticket](#)
- Submit a [Faculty Help Ticket](#)
- Phone 902-457-6511 or 1-800-665-3838

### Evening and Weekend Technical Support

Urgent requests are those that concern your ability to teach or participate in a class that same evening (after 4:30pm) or weekend. Please call the campus security switchboard at 902-457-6788 and explain if you are not able to teach or participate in a class, and the campus switchboard operator will forward your request to the appropriate technical support person who will address the issue. Only urgent requests will be responded to immediately, and others will be responded to the next business day.