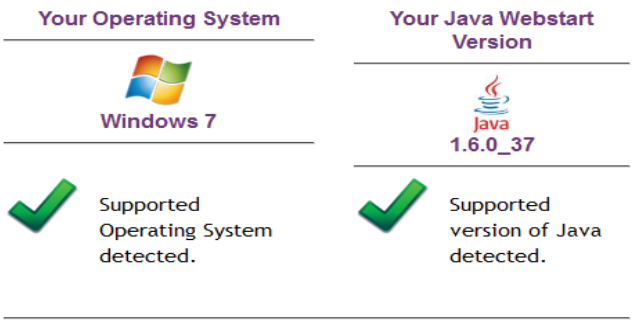
Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing - First Time Users

Click on this link to check your system and ensure that meet the system requirements. It will produce a report that looks like this.



In addition, please ensure the following:

- You are using the computer on which you will attend your session.
- Your computer is connected to the Internet and has a stable, reliable connection
- You have a microphone and speakers, preferably a headset to take full advantage of the collaborative capabilities during your session. Please check with the organization or instructor hosting the session if they will be using these features.
- You have the appropriate permissions to save files to your computer. If you are unsure, please contact your system administrator.
- If you are "Moderating" a session it is best to use a Computer or Laptop, Moderator functions on an ipad or iphone are limited.

General Information:

Before you begin using Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing, we recommend you do the following:

- Ensure your system meets the necessary requirements.
- Enter a session early, at least 15-30 minutes before the session is to start and ensure that you have enough time to check audio and video features and settings.
- Review Blackboard Collaborate ready to use accessibility features.
- Review and familiarize yourself with the Blackboard Collaborate user interface.

Quick Tips:

- Ensure that you have Java on your computer.
- ***Do not use an iphone or ipad to moderate a session***, use a computer or laptop.
- Ensure that you have a microphone, web cam, speakers or headset (headset is the best option to reduce feedback and echo).
- Give yourself ample time to test your computer before the scheduled Collaborate session.

System Requirements:

In order to use the accessibility features in Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing, your computer must meet the following system requirements.

Operating System:

Only Windows operating systems support **all** of the Blackboard Collaborate features. Mobile devices are not recommended for Moderators to use to facilitate a Collaborate session.

- Windows XP (32 bit), Windows Vista (32 bit or 64 bit) or Windows 7 (32 bit or 64 bit) l
- Pentium III 1 GHz processor
- 256 MB RAM

Linux (Ubuntu 11.10 or higher) and Mac (Mac OS X 10.6 or higher) users can use only some of the Blackboard Collaborate accessibility features (e.g., keyboard navigation). There is no screen reader capability on these systems.

> ***Please Note:*** *Accessibility features are not officially supported on Linux and Mac systems.*

Java Web Start – this is a requirement for the Blackboard Collaborate Sessions:

- Java version 1.5 or higher (32-bit or 64-bit) is required to run Blackboard Collaborate and the Java Access Bridge (see below).
- To check to see if you have the correct version of Java, open the following web page:
  - http://support.blackboardcollaborate.com/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=8336&task=knowledge&questionID=1473
- The "Step 1- Checking System Requirements" will tell you whether or not you have the required version of Java Web Start and, if not, provide a link to the Java download page.

Accessibility Items for Blackboard Collaborate:

Screen Readers

- JAWS (version 12 or 13) is the only supported screen reader for Blackboard Collaborate.
- **Note:** JAWS 12 and 13 support both 32-bit and 64-bit OSs/JVMs.

Java Access Bridge

- The Java™ Access Bridge is a technology that allows assistive technologies (such as screen readers, magnifiers, etc.) to access Java applications and applets. In order to use Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing version 12 with the JAWS screen reader, you must install Java Access Bridge version 2.0.2.
- Download the Java Access Bridge version 2.0.2 from following Oracle web page:
  - http://www.oracle.com/technetwork/java/javase/downloads/jab-2-0-2-download-354311.html
- For instructions on installing the access bridge, refer to the following Freedom Scientific FAQ:
  - http://www.freedomscientific.com/fs_support/BulletinView.asp?QC=1435

- **Note:** Whenever you install a new version of Java, you must re-install the Java Access Bridge.

Getting Ready for a Blackboard Collaborate Session:

If you will be using JAWS to navigate through the Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing interface, be sure to do the following:

1. Start JAWS before you log in to the session.
2. Verify that the Java Access Bridge is working.
3. Configure JAWS to read all access keys so the mnemonic keys are spoken aloud; otherwise, you won't be able to identify them. This setting is found under the basic settings of JAWS.

It is advisable to enter the room early (before the session starts) so you can configure your Blackboard Collaborate interface to suit your particular needs. How early you can enter the room is set by the session creator. The default is 15 to 30 minutes but the session creator may change that.

1. For those using audio in your Blackboard Collaborate session, run the Audio Setup Wizard to ensure your microphone and speakers are set to suitable levels. For details, see *Using the Audio Setup Wizard*.

2. For all users, set which Audible and Visual Notifications you wish to receive in the session.

Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing has been designed to meet the needs of users of various abilities. Some of the accessibility features are helpful to those whose mobility make it difficult for them to use a mouse, others are for users who are deaf or hard of hearing and others are for users with limited vision (including color blindness) or no vision. The table lists the various target audiences and the accessibility features from which each would benefit. If additional accessibility training is needed please attend a workshop.

User Issue	Accessibility Features
Low Vision	Maximizing window and panel sizes, activity window adjustments, audible notifications, keyboard shortcuts, hot keys, keyboard navigation, chat text size options, notes text size options, session plan display setting preferences, and application sharing viewing features.
Blind	Activity window, Audible notifications, keyboard shortcuts, hot keys, keyboard navigation
Deaf or Hard of hearing	Activity window, Visual notifications, closed-captioning, audio volume controls, and audio setup wizard.
Mobility	Keyboard shortcuts, hot keys, mnemonic keys, and keyboard navigation.
Color Blind	Session plan viewing options, closed-captioning window display options, application sharing hosting "shared region" and emphasis cursor.