# **Blackboard Collaborate (Original Experience) and Zoom Feature Comparison**

## Introduction

The purpose of this comparative investigation is to list features of either or both Blackboard Collaborate and Zoom, and provide detail about the technical specifications around those features.

### Blackboard Collaborate

Blackboard Collaborate is a web conferencing and instructional solution already in use by a significant number of World Campus courses. It was developed specifically for instructional purposes and supports a variety of use cases involving synchronous instruction. Note that this investigation only considers the “Original Experience” version of Collaborate, and not the newer “Ultra” version.

### Zoom

Zoom is a less fully-featured but more streamlined web conferencing solution that was not developed specifically for instructional use. It is presently being piloted at the University level, and is being considered to replace Collaborate.

## Comparison Matrix

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Blackboard Collaborate** | **Zoom** |
| Cost | WC contract | University contract (pending successful pilot conclusion) |
| Access | Passes accessibility review. Experience adapts for those with low bandwidth connections. | Passes accessibility review. Experience adapts for those with low bandwidth connections. |
| Audio/Video | Yes. Video quality is fair. | Yes. Video quality is very good. |
| Attendance | Yes | Yes |
| Polling | Yes | Yes |
| Breakout Rooms | Yes | Yes |
| Chat | Yes | Yes |
| Whiteboard | Yes | Yes |
| Screen sharing / screencast | Yes | Yes |
| Telephony | Yes | Yes |
| Large scale meetings / webinars | Can support sessions with up to 1000 simultaneous users | No - Maximum of 50 participants |
| Ability to invite non-PSU affiliated guests | Yes | Yes |
| Recording | Yes, including chat | Yes, including chat |
| Schedule Meetings | Must be done with the HelpDesk’s assistance | Can be done by the user |

## Conclusion

Zoom offers superior video capability, and importantly offers features of Collaborate that are used in specific instructional scenarios in World Campus classes, such as polling and breakout rooms. Rarely are synchronous sessions of more than 50 participants used, but in such cases (if they exist), alternate strategies for delivering instruction should be considered.

## Study Weaknesses

This study only used the available fact sheets and technical documentation for the respective products as sources for information; side-by-side testing was not done in order to measure actual performance or usability of the products in real-world use case simulations.