

Options in Blackboard for Faculty-Created Video Contents

Many instructors have come to recognize the impact that adding video contents to their Blackboard courses can have on instructional effectiveness and student success. Whether it's a short and simple welcome/introduction message or a full-length lecture, videos are quickly emerging as a popular option for direct instruction and supplementary content in fully online, blended/hybrid, and web-supported courses at UHCL.

Available Tools for Video Production

There are several tools that instructors at UHCL have employed to bring their own video contents into their Blackboard courses. These include narrated PowerPoints, Office Mix, Collaborate (built into Blackboard), Camtasia (a third-party application available from Tech Smith), video camera recordings created by the instructor, and video recordings made using UCT's light board. The following table provides a comparison of these options:

Option	Uses and Benefits	Disadvantages and Limitations
Narrated PowerPoint	Narrated PowerPoints are the most-used option among faculty, largely because many instructors are already familiar with PowerPoint.	Instructors should NOT upload to Blackboard narrated PowerPoints in their native (e.g., PPT, PPTX) format. Instead, instructors should export the narrated PPT as a video (MP4) file, which may then either be saved to a cloud-based service (e.g., YouTube) and deployed in Blackboard as a URL, or deployed to the university's streaming media server and deployed in the course as a web link or embedded item.
Office Mix (for Office 2016 and earlier)	Office Mix was originally an add-on from Microsoft for PowerPoint. The tool simplified the process of creating MP4 video files from narrated PowerPoints and also supported the ability to draw on the slides as the instructor presented. Microsoft stopped supporting the Office Mix add-on in 2018 and began including its	Our team can provide limited support to faculty who use Office Mix. However, Microsoft no longer provides technical support for the product, instead encouraging users to upgrade to a new version of the Office suite.

	<p>functionality into the newer versions of Office (e.g., Office 2016, Office 2019). However, if you are using a UHCL workstation or personal device with Office 2016 or earlier, our team can provide you with a copy of the plug-in file that use can use.</p>	
<p>Blackboard Collaborate (Web Conferencing)</p>	<p>Integrated into Blackboard and can be used to facilitate synchronous (“real time”) communication between two or more members of a class, including the instructor. Enables participants to display contents from their computer, share documents, annotate displayed materials, and record the session. Participants can employ microphones, text, and/or web cameras as needed to participate in the session.</p>	<p>Although much more user-friendly than its predecessor, WIMBA, Collaborate still takes some practice on the part of instructors to get comfortable with the system.</p>
<p>Audio/Video Feedback (within Blackboard)</p>	<p>Faculty can record up to 5 minutes of audio or video feedback to each student when grading in Blackboard.</p>	<p>This feature is limited to use in the grading area of Blackboard and cannot be used for lecture videos and other non-feedback purposes.</p>
<p>Camtasia (Tech Smith)</p>	<p>Camtasia, which is increasingly used at UHCL, and its direct competitors, enables instructors to create a video in which they narrate/lecture while showing contents from their computer monitor (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, Word documents, spreadsheets, web sites, specialty software applications). There is also an option for a small video of the speaker to be displayed in a corner of the video, as well.</p>	<p>Camtasia is not integrated with Blackboard. Therefore, either the individual instructor or their department must absorb the costs associated with acquiring a copy of the application. However, UCT’s instructional design staff has a room in the B3221 suite equipped with Camtasia and faculty may schedule time (through their designated instructional designer) to use the application in that location.</p>
<p>Video Camera Recording (Instructor-Generated)</p>	<p>Many instructors find it very easy to simply record themselves conducting a traditional lecture, either on a</p>	<p>Instructor bears responsibility to capture and edit the video(s). Video quality varies tremendously, depending on</p>

	<p>personal video camera or even from the camera within their smart phone. Videos can be made and deployed quickly. UCT will provide assistance, upon request, with loading instructor-created videos to the streaming media server and deploying videos as streaming contents within Blackboard courses.</p>	<p>the quality of the video camera used. It can be difficult to clearly capture anything other than the speaker (e.g., images on a SmartBoard or white board). File sizes can be extremely large, making the process of uploading to Blackboard and the subsequent access by students highly problematic.</p>
<p>Video Light Board Recording (Created by the Instructor and a member of the Instructional Design team)</p>	<p>For presentations in which an instructor needs to demonstrate something that they would typically draw on a white board in a face-to-face course, UCT has a light board that may be used by appointment to record short lectures. Your designated instructional designer is the point of contact to reserve the space/equipment and they will record your presentation, get it processed and deployed on the university's streaming media server, and embed the video in your Blackboard course(s). There is no cost to the instructor and/or department for these services.</p>	<p>Requires that the instructor is able to come to the UHCL campus to record the lecture. Needs to be planned well in advance, to permit sufficient time to shoot, edit, and deploy the video(s).</p>

For more information, please consult the following resources:

Narrated PowerPoint

- ✓ [Handout \(Creating a Video \(MP4\) from a Narrated PowerPoint\)](#) available on UHCL's [Blackboard Faculty Support web page](#). Located under the "UHCL Web-Based Courses Info" heading.

Office Mix

- ✓ Request a copy of the Microsoft Office Mix plug-in by contacting your designated instructional designer (ID) directly, or by contacting the Support Center and asking that a help ticket be created. The help ticket will be routed to your designated ID, who will then follow up with you.

Blackboard Collaborate

- ✓ [Handout \(Using Collaborate to Record a Presentation – Instructor Guide\)](#) available on UHCL's Blackboard Faculty Support web page.
- ✓ Blackboard's Help Site [information on Collaborate ULTRA](#) for faculty/moderators

Audio/Video Feedback (in Blackboard)

- ✓ Blackboard's Help Site [information on Record Audio and Video](#) for instructors.

Camtasia

- ✓ Tech Smith's [Camtasia web site](#) contains information, pricing, and [tutorials](#) about the Camtasia application.
- ✓ To schedule a recording session in UCT's B3221 suite, contact your designated instructional designer (ID) directly, or contact the Support Center and ask that a help ticket be created. The help ticket will be routed to your designated ID, who will then follow up with you regarding scheduling.

Video Light Board

- ✓ To see an example of a video created using the light board, view our team's short video, [Understanding the Course Development Calendar \[3:37\]](#).
- ✓ To "test drive" the light board, or to schedule a recording session, contact your designated instructional designer (ID) directly, or contact the Support Center and ask that a help ticket be created. The help ticket will be routed to your designated ID, who will then follow up with you regarding scheduling.

In addition, there are numerous demo, open source and shareware options available for producing video contents. However, UCT can only provide support for the options discussed in this document.

Guidelines, Tips and Advice for Using Video in Blackboard

Regardless of how you create your own video contents, there are some issues of which you should be aware when planning to deploy those into Blackboard:

1. **File size and formats:** Video files tend to be extremely large and, as a result, when not properly deployed can negatively impact the performance (speed) of your Blackboard course and can be frustrating for students to access and play. In addition, video files can be created in a number of file formats. Depending on the format that you use, students may have difficulty opening your video. For these reasons, we strongly recommend that you work with one of UHCL's instructional designers to convert your video(s) to a standard file format, upload it to the university's streaming media server, and deploy it into your course as a streaming item. NOTE: Your video isn't reviewed and doesn't go through any type of approval process. They merely get a copy of the file from you, process it, transfer it to the server, and then create a link to it within your course.

If you prefer to retain complete ownership/control of your video contents, we recommend that you upload your video(s) to YouTube and then create links to your videos within Blackboard

using Blackboard's Web Link tool. NOTE: If you prefer that your video not be accessible to the general public on YouTube, upload it as an "unlisted" video.

2. **Accessibility provisions:** It is not uncommon for UHCL to have students with low or no vision and/or low or no hearing enrolled in classes each semester. In order to make your course contents readily accessible to these learners (as required by federal law), it's a good practice to provide text alternatives to all video contents within your Blackboard courses. Two recommended practices are providing print-based transcripts of the audio contents of your videos as a link to accompany the video or to provide closed captions with your video contents. In addition, for learners with low or no vision you also need to provide an audio description of any relevant visual elements in your video that are not already thoroughly described in your narration. Additional information about making multimedia contents accessible may be found at the W3C web page, [Multimedia Accessibility FAQ](#). In addition, UHCL's Disability Services staff is also equipped to assist you with your accommodation efforts. Contact information for that office and information for faculty are provided on the [Disability Services web site](#).
3. **Planning and scripting:** Instructors typically find that producing their own video contents is expedited when they carefully plan the video, beginning with the drafting of a script and by assembling any visual elements (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, charts, graphics) in advance of recording. Having a script to follow not only streamlines the recording process, the script document may then be used as an optional transcript or as the basis for creating closed captions for accessibility.

However you decide to produce your own custom video contents, rest assured that you are not entirely on your own. UCT's instructional designers (IDs) are standing by to offer suggestions for how you may best proceed, offer support, and provide assistance with getting your videos stored on the university's streaming media server and deployed within Blackboard.