

Web conferencing Platforms at Seneca

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Seneca supports the following web conferencing tools: **BigBlueButton**, **Microsoft Teams**, **Webex**, and **Zoom**. These tools can provide enterprise-level functionality for online teaching. They have been vetted by Seneca's Educational Technology Advisory Committee, the Teaching & Learning Centre, and ITS and meet College requirements for accessibility, privacy, and cost.

Please remember to always use Seneca provisioned tools (i.e., Learn@Seneca, OneDrive, SharePoint, Seneca email) when collecting and/or storing student's identifiable personal information. ITS support is available to faculty using Seneca provided tools.

The [Classroom Management and Security Online \(PDF\)](#) tips can help create a smooth and trusting learning environment.

BigBlueButton

BigBlueButton is a robust, open-source web-conferencing tool integrated into Learn@Seneca. Each course in Learn@Seneca can have a BigBlueButton conferencing room assigned to it. BigBlueButton runs in any browser and there is no need to download a client application. BigBlueButton is designed as a teaching tool and is useful for active, synchronous classes. It has a robust feature set which includes chat, presentation sharing, video sharing, screen sharing, polling, breakout rooms, whiteboard with collaborative annotation, and recording. Faculty can pre-record and share short lessons for students to watch at a time convenient to them and therefore a great tool to support a flipped class model. Live class meetings can be recorded and saved to the cloud, which allows students to access the class recordings anytime for review. We can proudly say that Seneca students have contributed some of the code used in BigBlueButton.

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is a Seneca sanctioned office collaboration tool. It is more than a video conferencing tool – it also allows for file sharing, asynchronous chat, and collaborative group work. It is not integrated with Learn@Seneca, so you and your students will have to

access Microsoft Teams through its own application (available for desktop, mobile, and via the web). It can be used as a one stop shop for both out of class collaboration and virtual class meetings, or can be strictly for collaboration in addition to another tool for meeting. The important thing to note, especially if you're coming from Collaborate Ultra, is that Teams is more than a virtual meeting platform. It is unrivalled for collaboration and has many functions outside of meetings. The increased functionality comes with more complexity and so the big question for you, as a faculty member, is how you might utilize these functions in a pedagogically valuable way that makes the additional complexity worth it for your class.

Webex

WebEx is a long-existing and very mature web-conferencing and collaboration tool available for use at Seneca for various requirements. It possesses many features useful for participant interaction and presentation management, including chat, session recordings, attendance tracking, poll creation, breakout rooms, audio/video control, and host transfer. Webex allows for the use of a wide range of learning strategies. Recorded content can be shared via the cloud or through local downloads for students to review.

Zoom

Zoom is a robust web-conferencing tool that is licensed for all faculty and students at Seneca. Zoom is integrated into Learn@Seneca, meaning students can access links to classes and recordings within their Learn@Seneca course. Breakout rooms in Zoom can be used to facilitate collaboration and groupwork. Polls can be used to get immediate feedback from students during class discussion. Faculty can pre-record and share a short lecture for students to watch for a flipped class model. Live class meetings can be recorded and saved to the cloud for students to review.

What's the difference?

We created the following comparison chart to show the features of each web-conferencing tool and how they compare to each other:



Web Conferencing Tools at Seneca: A Comparison

Functionality	BigBlueButton	Microsoft Teams	Webex	Zoom
Integrated into Learn@Seneca	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Maximum number of attendees	100 users or less for best performance (recommended)	300	1000	300
Web or App	Web	Web or App	Web or App	Web or App

At *Teaching & Learning Day Spring 2021* on May 3, 2021, we facilitated a workshop called "**Life Beyond Blackboard Ultra.**" In this workshop, we introduced the web-conferencing tools (Zoom, BigBlueButton, Microsoft Teams, and Webex), and led discussions about what we want and don't want from a virtual conferencing tool. This session provided a high-level overview of the different options to help you choose which platforms to try. Watch the recording now:



Resources to learn more about each tool

[Teaching with BigBlueButton](#)

[Teaching with Microsoft Teams](#)

[Teaching with Webex](#)

[Teaching with Zoom](#)

tags : bbb, bigbluebutton, cisco-webex, educational-technology, educational-technology-tools, microsoft-teams, ms-teams, teaching-and-learning, teaching-and-learning-centre, web-conferencing, web-conferencing-main, webex, whats-new, zoom