

Digital Toolbox

Below is a list of the technology tools available at CUNY and Brooklyn College. Keep in mind that Blackboard is the primary online learning platform at CUNY, but you can explore the other supported tools, as needed, to enhance instruction. **Be sure to review [CUNY's comprehensive FAQ for accessing and using CUNY technology for remote instruction](#).**

Select a Tool to Learn More

- [Blackboard](#)
- [Zoom](#)
- [Microsoft Office 365](#)
- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Dropbox](#)
- [Recording Your PowerPoint Lecture](#)
- [CUNY Academic Commons](#)
- [BC WebCentral](#)

* [View a comparison chart of all the tools.](#)



Using Your CUNY Login

Many of the tools below require signing-in with your CUNY Login credentials. Your CUNY Login is based on your **CUNYfirst username** and typically follows the following format:

username: *firstname.lastname##@login.cuny.edu* (the numbers are usually the last two digits of your EMPLID)
password: *your CUNYfirst password*

Technical Questions

718.951.4357 / helpdesk@brooklyn.cuny.edu

[BC Email/Network Account Application](#)

Blackboard Questions

718.951.4634 / aitsupport@brooklyn.cuny.edu

646.664.2024 [After Hours Support](#) (8pm-8am and weekends)

Pedagogical Questions

[Center for Teaching and Learning](#)

You can also [Schedule a Consultation for Remote Instruction](#) (scheduled within 48 hours)

Blackboard

Blackboard is CUNY's primary learning management system and is fully-supported by CUNY and Brooklyn College [Academic Information Technology](#).

How do I access Blackboard?

Go to bbhosted.cuny.edu and sign in using your CUNY Login credentials.

Benefits

- The only complete learning management tool available at CUNY
- All courses and student enrollments are pre-populated in Blackboard each semester in course shells
- Many available tutorials
- Video conferencing via Collaborate Tool
- Discussion boards
- SafeAssign
- Online testing options

Drawbacks

- Relatively steep learning curve to fully utilize all of the tools
- Communication with students in Blackboard uses student's cuny.edu email addresses (not the student's preferred email address)

Getting Started Resources

- [Introduction to Blackboard](#)
- [Teaching Remotely – Putting your Course Resources Online](#)
- [Blackboard Collaborate Tutorials](#)
- [Adding Collaborate Ultra As A Permanent Space](#)
- [Brooklyn College Blackboard for Faculty](#)
- [CUNY Blackboard Resources](#)
- [BMCC - Step-by-Step Guide to Using Blackboard](#)

How can I protect my Blackboard Collaborate session from uninvited guests (Zoombombing)?

It is recommended that you **do not** send the direct link to your Blackboard sessions to your students. Anyone with the "guest link" that Blackboard generates can access your session. Instead, create a dedicated content area for your Blackboard Collaborate sessions where students can find all your Collaborate class sessions. See: [Adding Collaborate Ultra As A Permanent Space](#).

Where do I go for help?

Contact AIT at aitsupport@brooklyn.cuny.edu or call 718-951-4634

Zoom

Zoom is a video conferencing platform licensed by CUNY for all active faculty and students.

How do I access Zoom?

Go to cuny.zoom.us and sign in using your CUNY Login credentials. If you are using the Zoom desktop or mobile app, review the [detailed instructions](#) for using the SSO option.

How can I use this in my class?

1. [Login to your Zoom account](#) and schedule a new meeting, you can also share your personal meeting room link
2. [Get your student email addresses](#) and invite them to the conference
3. You have the option to record your conference for students unable to make the live recording
4. Share the recording link via email

Getting Started Resources

- [CUNY Zoom Information Page](#)
- [Zoom Training Resources](#)
- [Zoom Video Tutorials](#)
- [Getting Started Guide](#)
- [Using Breakout Rooms](#)
- [Installing and Using the Zoom Outlook Plugin](#)

Can I take attendance in Zoom?

The best approach for tracking attendance would be to require [meeting registration](#) so you have everyone's full name. After the meeting, you can download the participant list from the usage reports. To access: log into your Zoom [web portal](#) and navigate to the "Reports" tab. From the available reports, select "Usage," click on the participant count of the meeting you want to review. You can export this list to a spreadsheet.

How can I protect my class from uninvited guests (Zoombombing)?

Please follow [CUNY's Zoom Security Protocol](#) when using Zoom. In summary, always set a meeting password, do not use your personal meeting ID for your class, and use the [waiting room](#) option.

Where do I go for help?

Contact the ITS helpdesk at: helpdesk@brooklyn.cuny.edu or 718-951-4357 to request a Zoom account and for access problems.

If your conference is not working properly, [check the Zoom status page](#).

Microsoft Office 365

Office 365 is Microsoft's entire office suite online. You can download all of the office free of charge on up to five devices, including desktops and laptops, tablets, and smart phones. This includes widely used Microsoft applications, such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneDrive, Outlook, and Skype for Business

How do I access Office 365?

Go to office.com and login using your CUNY Login credentials.

Benefits

- Free Microsoft Office
- Use all applications online or install on your computer or device
- Many available tutorials
- Easy to share links to files and folders with your students
- Free cloud storage from CUNY
- Additional collaboration and productivity tools, such as Teams, Planner and ToDo

Drawbacks

- Requires some training to get comfortable using the entire suite.
- Intended to be more of productivity and collaboration platform as opposed to a learning management system like Blackboard

How can I use this in my class?

1. Prepare your lessons using Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.
2. Share files with students directly from OneDrive, Teams or save them to your Dropbox.

Getting Started Resources

- [CUNY Office 365 Training Resources](#)
- Just go to Youtube and search for any of the available applications.
- [Lynda.com/LinkedIn Learning - free access using Brooklyn Public Library card](#)

What happens to my Office 365 and Dropbox account if I leave CUNY?

If you are using PowerPoint, Word, Excel, etc. to create and share your course materials or using OneDrive or Dropbox, the software licensing and storage is linked to your CUNY credentials. The license will expire a short period after your CUNY Login is deactivated. There is at least a 30-day grace period to back-up materials, but CUNY IT admins can restore backups, if needed.

Where do I go for help?

Contact AIT at aitsupport@brooklyn.cuny.edu for assistance and training using Office tools

Contact the ITS helpdesk at: helpdesk@brooklyn.cuny.edu or 718-951-4357 for access problems.

Microsoft Teams

Teams is a group collaboration platform built on top of Microsoft Office 365.

How do I access Teams?

Go to office.com or teams.microsoft.com and login using your CUNY Login credentials.

Benefits

- Hosted on CUNY Office 365
- Excellent for both real-time and asynchronous group discussion and collaboration
- Share, collect and edit Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files
- Collaborative file-editing
- Assignments and quizzes
- Integrated video conferencing with recording
- Generally very fun to use once you get used to it

Drawbacks

- Students must be invited as guests to your *team* since students do not share the same Office 365 environment as staff.
- You need to manually invite students "one-by-one" to your team via email
- Ideal for small classes
- Takes some practice

How can I use this in my class?

1. Follow the tutorials below to create a new team for your class
2. [Get your student email addresses](#) and invite them to the team
3. Create channels to keep topics focused
4. Share your lessons using the *Files* tab
5. [Create a classroom plan using Planner](#)
6. [Start a video conference](#) for your class.

Why can't I schedule a future meeting in Teams?

Due to limitations in our CUNY Office 365 environments, you cannot schedule future meetings. All meetings must be started on-demand. The best workaround is to simply start an on-demand meeting in the Team at the planned meeting time. Attendees just need to enter the Team to join the meeting--no link needed.

Getting Started Resources

- [Setting up Your Course on Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Microsoft: Welcome to Teams](#)
- [Microsoft: Instructor Lead Training - Best Practices](#)
- [Microsoft: Teams Training](#)
- [Teams Tips and Tricks](#)
- [CUNY Office 365 resources](#)

Dropbox

Dropbox is a cloud storage service enabling easy online backup, file sharing and document collaboration. Files you store in your Dropbox can be accessed online and look like regular files on your computer. Files stored in your Dropbox are accessible from anywhere you have Internet access, including mobile devices. You can easily share files in Dropbox with students regardless of file size.

How do I access my CUNY Dropbox?

Go to dropbox.cuny.edu and login using your CUNY Login credentials. You can choose to install Dropbox on your computer and mobile device.

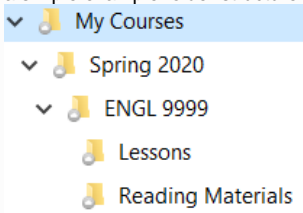
Benefits

- Very easy to use
- Fast setup time: usually around 5 minutes
- Use from your web browser or install to your computer
- Access your files from anywhere
- Many available tutorials
- Easy to share links to files and folders with your students
- Easy to collect files from your students
- Unlimited free cloud storage from CUNY

Drawbacks

- Not intended for real-time collaboration with students
- Requires [downloading your student email addresses](#) to share files

How can I use this in my class?

1. Copy your course materials to Dropbox and share links to the files or entire folders with your class via email. Here is a simple example folder structure:

2. Copy recordings of your lectures created using one of the other tool options on this page (PowerPoint Recording, Blackboard, Teams or Google Meet) and store the videos on Dropbox. Share links to videos via email.
3. Collect files from your students using [File Requests](#)

Getting Started Resources

- [How to start using your Dropbox account](#)
- [Complete Dropbox video training playlist](#) (use the [CUNY sign-in link](#) instead of dropbox.com)
- [CUNY Dropbox training resources](#)

Where do I go for help?

Contact the ITS helpdesk at: helpdesk@brooklyn.cuny.edu or 718-951-4357.

Recording Your PowerPoint Lecture

A simple way to record your lecture with video and voice-over narration is to use the [Record a Slide Show](#) feature in PowerPoint 2016 or later. This is an easy way to simulate some of your classroom experience without the need for expensive recording equipment or special screen capturing software.

How can I get the latest version of PowerPoint?

Go to office.com and login using your CUNY Login credentials. You will see an option to "Install Office". You have free access to the Office 365 suite from CUNY. See below for details on Office 365.

Benefits

- Very easy to use
- Many available tutorials on the web
- You can re-record sections of your presentation as needed

Drawbacks

- Plan your recording carefully
- You need a computer with a microphone and video camera (for video recording)

How can I use this in my class?

1. If you haven't done so already, create a PowerPoint presentation for your lesson.
2. Use the [Record a Slide Show](#) feature to record your video and/or voice-over
3. [Export your presentation to video](#)
4. [Copy your video file to Dropbox](#)
5. [Share your video with students](#)

Getting Started Resources

- [How to record a PowerPoint presentation](#)

CUNY Academic Commons

The CUNY Academic Commons is a WordPress platform customized for CUNY instructors and students. You can host your course on the platform using only a "Group". Groups have a simple setup process and allow instructors to store course materials in the group library, host discussions in the forum, and email students.

How do I access the CUNY Academic Commons?

Go to: commons.gc.cuny.edu and [register for a new account](#) (if you don't already have an account).

Getting Started Resources

- [Quick User Guide](#)
- [Commons Help](#)

Where do I go for help?

Contact AIT at aitsupport@brooklyn.cuny.edu or call 718-951-5242

* Thank you to the CUNY Graduate Center for this wonderful service

BC WebCentral

WebCentral is Brooklyn College internal web portal with links to internal college news, forms, web applications and other online services.

How do I access WebCentral?

Go to portal.brooklyn.edu and login using your WebCentral login credentials. Note: Your WebCentral account is separate from your CUNY Login and you need to [create your own WebCentral account](#).

How can I use this in my class?

Although WebCentral is not an instructional platform, it includes key support tools:

- Go to "My Teaching Schedule & Rosters" to access:
 - Current and past teaching schedules and rosters
 - Roll book (with holidays and conversion days)
 - Current class roster with photos
 - Download rosters as Excel or PDF
 - Email your students to their preferred email address (not bcmail.cuny.edu)
- Publish your office hours (displayed in student WebCentral schedule view)
- Update your faculty profile (research, publications, etc.)
- Post class cancellation or change alerts

Drawbacks

- The preferred student email addresses in WebCentral may differ from CUNYfirst and Blackboard, but are usually the most current and have a higher success rate in reaching students.
- Enrollment information in WebCentral is updated nightly and will not reflect intra-day changes. Use CUNYfirst for real-time roster information. See [downloading your student email addresses](#) to share files

How can I use this in my class?

- View your student roster with photos to compare with students attending online Zoom conferences.
- [Download your student email addresses](#) to create a local email distribution list or share Zoom conference links.
- Post your office hours if you plan to be available virtually.
- Use the class cancellation alerts to notify students ahead of time to any changes in scheduling changes.

Where do I go for help?

Contact the ITS helpdesk at: helpdesk@brooklyn.cuny.edu or 718-951-4357.