

# Current Topics In Remote Instruction

*An update in WebEx software capabilities, choosing between video conferencing tools, submitting midterm grades, and tips for increasing student participation in online classes.*



## UPCOMING WEBEX UPDATES

With the transition to online learning over the last year, use of videoconferencing software has increased by 400%. Because of this, WebEx and other videoconferencing technology has been quick to update and add new features to make videoconferencing an easier experience for course delivery. ITS' Academic IT department has recently made the announcement that a new feature will allow users to move freely between breakout rooms, which will introduce more flexibility with the breakout rooms. Academic IT released the following announcement on the update:

"Webex released an update this week where session hosts can allow participants to choose a breakout room and move freely among them. This gives instructors another option for designing engaging digital spaces. More information about how to configure this setting in Webex is available on the IT Knowledge Base."

For more information and support on these technologies, contact the appropriate technology department for support or a consultation.

## KNOWN WEBEX ISSUE

Some updates to Webex included the ability of instructors to pre-assign their WebEx breakout rooms. This feature has introduced a new convenience for those electing to use WebEx as their primary web-conferencing software, but an important issue has arisen with the function.

When you create breakout rooms using the pre-assign function, the email used to assign an individual to a room becomes their unique identifier. This means that the student must join the WebEx session using that email. If they use a different email, they will appear twice in the Breakout Session manager. Be sure to remind your students to join the session using the consistent email as to avoid running into this issue.

If you do run into this issue, you can expel the second user from the session and assign the student to a breakout session.

## ADOBE FLASH END OF LIFE

For instructors using media created in Flash Player, students may report the videos no longer work. Please note this is because Flash is no longer supported due to an Adobe update which is removing support for Flash player. Instructors will need to either convert the videos or upload them to Kaltura Media Gallery. If you are unsure of how to approach this step, please contact Educational Technologies at [edtech@uconn.edu](mailto:edtech@uconn.edu)

## USE MEDIA GALLERY FROM KALTURA TO VIEW ANALYTICS ON THE VIDEOS YOU SHARE IN YOUR COURSE

If you add the Media Gallery tool to your HuskyCT course, you can access the analytics dashboard to see what videos are being watched and who is watching them. When you add the tool, click on it and click on the Channel Action icon (show below). Then turn on the setting, "Display embedded media in this Media Gallery." Once you turn this on, any video shared in a Content Area or Discussion Board will appear in the Media Gallery tool.



## LOCKDOWN BROWSER HELP TOOL

As the semester progresses, more faculty and students are using Lockdown Browser to administer and take exams virtually. At EdTech, we want to bring the LDB Support option to everyone's attention. There is a "Help Center" button when using LDB which can assist students with issues in 90 seconds or less when using the software. Hopefully, this will provide some peace of mind with technology issues moving forward.



## STILL DECIDING BETWEEN WEBEX AND COLLABORATE?



The transition to entirely remote instruction has posed an issue of choice between video conferencing software. Many instructors have found themselves choosing between WebEx and Blackboard Collaborate. We created some resources to make the decision easier and more detailed than ever. You can find a table comparing the technologies on our knowledge base, but here is a highlight of the most popular features compared between the two softwares.

Item	WebEx	Blackboard Collaborate
Max # Participants	1000	500
Max # Participants Visible	25	4
BB Integration	Yes	Yes
Sharing on iPad	Yes	No*
Breakout Rooms	Yes	Yes

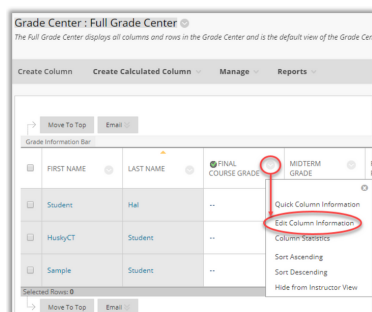
\*must be shared through presenter's computer

## SUBMITTING MIDTERM GRADES

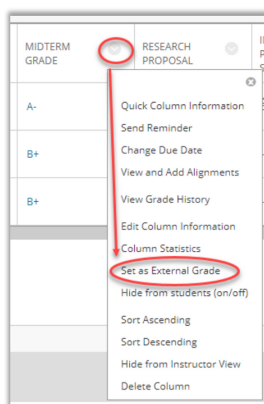
While it may be difficult to believe, it is already time to start thinking about midterm grades. According to University by-laws, instructors shall submit midterm grades for students in 1000 and 2000-level courses who are earned less than a C or currently have a U or N grade up to that point. Despite this, instructors are encouraged to submit midterm grades for all courses and for all students in order to provide students with a clear understanding of their course standing. Instructors have the option of submitting midterm grades individually in StudentAdmin, uploading an excel file with midterm grades, or uploading the grades directly from HuskyCT. For more support on this topic, you can find information on our IT Knowledge Base or contact Educational Technologies for support.

### STEPS THROUGH HUSKYCT

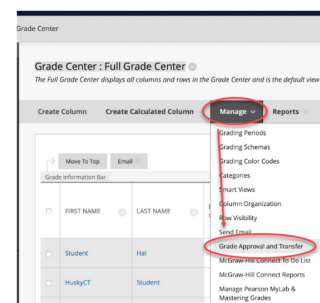
Step 1: First, edit your column to be labeled "MIDTERM GRADE"



Step 2: Set the column as External Grade.

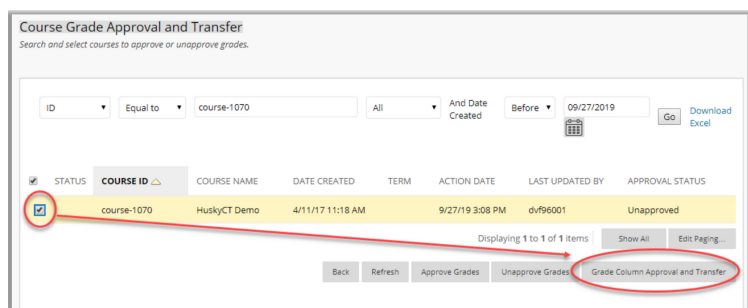


Step 3: Access "Grade Approval and Transfer"



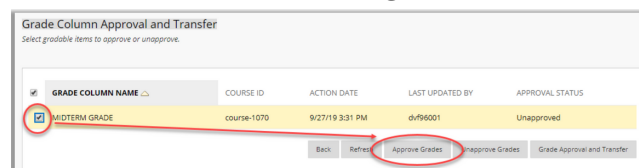
Once you have named your grade column correctly, set it as the external grade, and made sure the Primary Display is showing a letter grade, you are ready to proceed to Step 2 and "push" that column to Student Admin.

On the Grade Approval and Transfer page, check the box for your course and click "Grade Column Approval and Transfer."



Next, you will see the column you had previously set as the External Grade. Check the box next to the column name and click "Approve Grades." This will send the grades to Student Admin. **REMINDER: This does not finalize grade**

**approval in the Student Admin system. You will still need to login to StudentAdmin and complete the grade approval process there for your grades to become "official" for the Registrar.**



Once you have completed these steps to push grades from HuskyCT to Student Admin, it may take up to 2 hours for those grades to appear in your Student Admin Grade Roster. (At a minimum, the process will take 45 minutes.)

If you find that you need to change a student's grade after you have already pushed your grades to Student Admin, you can still change that grade in HuskyCT and repeat Step 2. That will re-push grades to Student Admin.

# STRUGGLING WITH STUDENT PARTICIPATION?

A recent study in student engagement after the transition to remote learning due to the pandemic has been published by Life Sciences Education. The study published in December of 2020 revealed student participation dropped after the transition to remote learning. While this data was jarring news for instructors, the study also explored seven different strategies for increasing student participation in remote coursework. The strategies included re-establishing norms, using student names, using breakout rooms, leveraging chat-based participation, using polling software, creating an inclusive curriculum, and cutting content to maintain rigor.

## BREAKOUT ROOMS

The research study found many students refrained from full-class participation, but also that students were more likely to participate during breakout rooms in small group discussion.

## CHAT-BASED PARTICIPATION

Leveraging chat-based participation showed a low barrier option for students to participate during discussion. Additionally, due to limited access to certain technologies, chat-based participation may provide an opportunity to participate to students who otherwise do not have access to a microphone or video camera.

## RE-ESTABLISHING NORMS

With the move online, re-establishing the norms of classroom, in-person instructions has been critical in student success online. Some classroom norms that have been found to increase student participation are encouraging students using raise-hand functions in web conferencing software when they have questions and engaging in small group participation during class.

## USING STUDENT NAMES

Many instructors in the STEM field reported not using student names, even late in the semester. This provides a barrier for social presence, and can be improved by instructors' increased effort to actively utilize student names in class.

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## INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

One strategy explored in the study was creating an inclusive curriculum. Instructors created a social presence by connecting their curricula directly to the students' lived experiences. For example, in a discussion about biomedicine and traditional medicine, instructors allowed students to engage with personal anecdotes and deeper connections between materials and class assignments. As a result, the class engaged in deeper, more involved discussion of materials, which led to increased student engagement and participation.

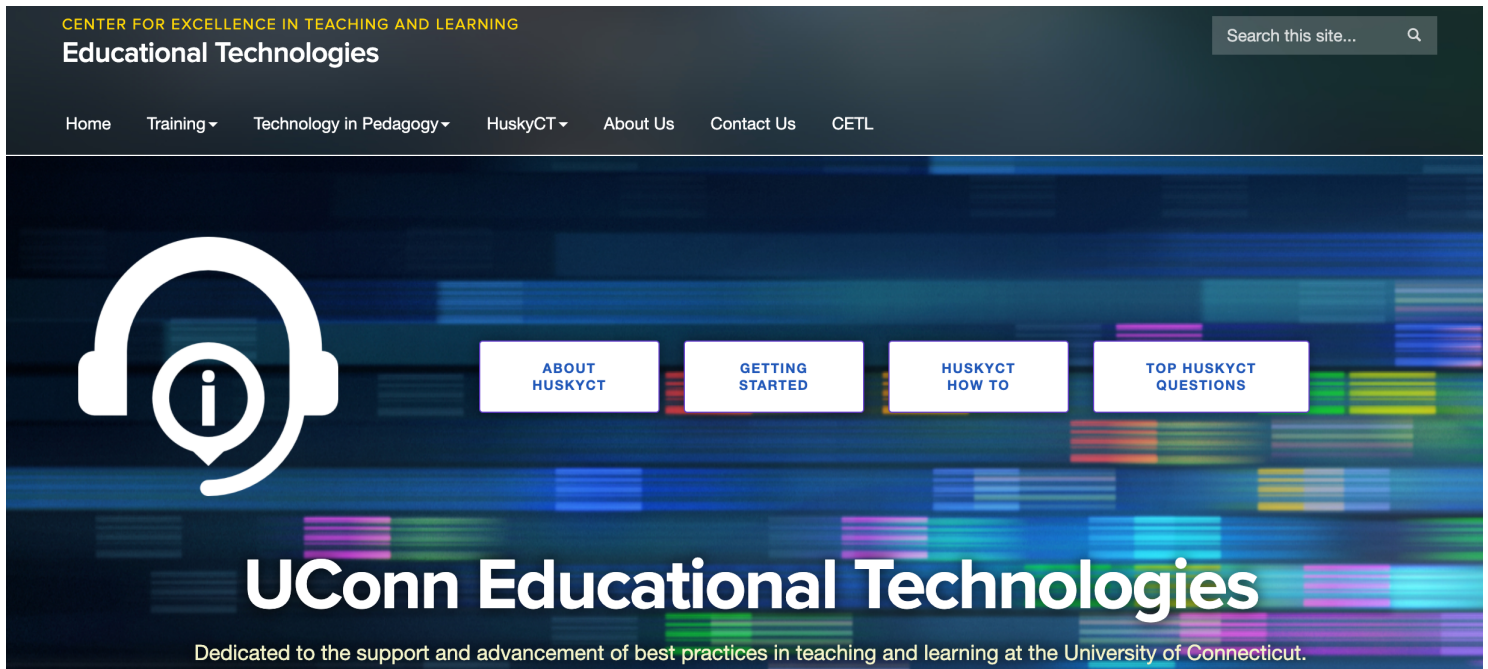
## CUTTING CONTENT

A large component of the transition online was a concern with lack of time to do educational tasks typically associated with in-person instruction. One suggestion brought on by this study was cutting the content of course instruction and introducing more involved, deeper engagement in class. Instead of attempting to complete ten short problems, instructors saw increased participation with introducing fewer, more involved problems for class discussion.



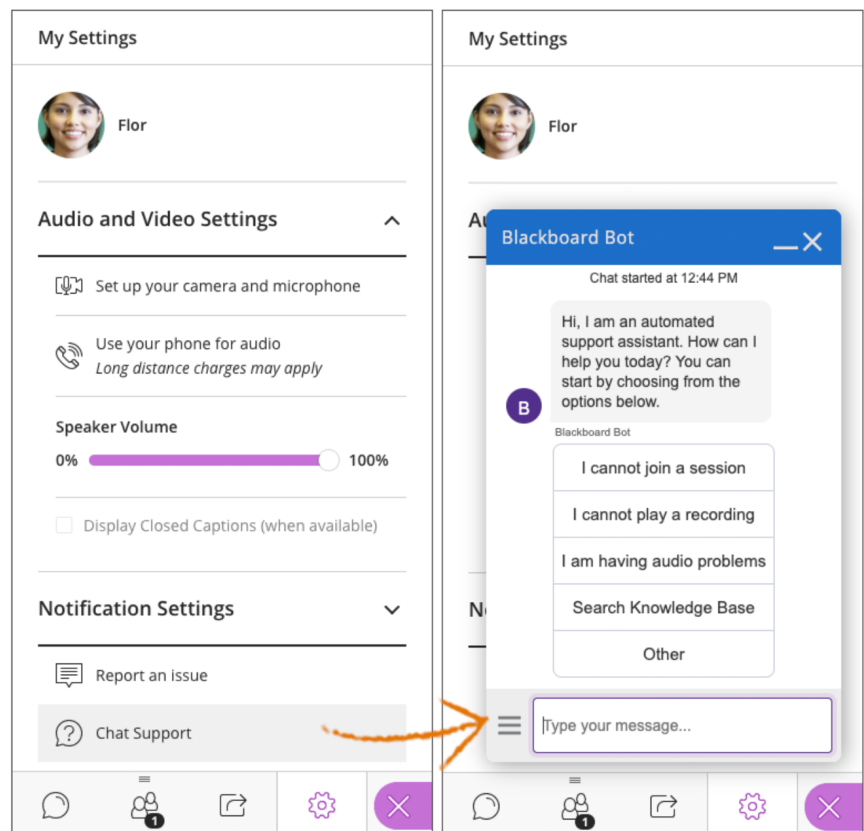
## NEW EDTECH WEBSITE

This February, we are excited to announce an exciting update in the delivery of technology support at the University of Connecticut. The Educational Technologies office has introduced their new website, [edtech.uconn.edu](https://edtech.uconn.edu). The site is aimed at providing easier access to resources on Educational Technology used by the University.



## NEW CHATBOT FEATURE IN COLLABORATE

A feature in Blackboard Collaborate may provide more help during live, synchronous course delivery this Spring. A live chatbot for student support is available when using Blackboard Collaborate. If a student is experiencing issues while in session during a lecture or small group collaboration, they can use the chatbot feature of blackboard to receive live support to resolve their technical issue. Troubleshooting common issues in blackboard should be easier with this new feature. As always, students can contact ITS at [techsupport@uconn.edu](mailto:techsupport@uconn.edu) with known and continuous technical problems.



# The No-Fail Guide To Lockdown Browser

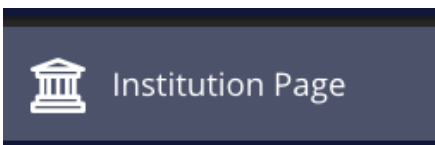
*Moving into midterms already, we have included this no-fail guide to Lockdown Browser to remind faculty of the do's and don'ts of using the technology.*

## 1. ATTEND A WORKSHOP 3. SET UP A PRACTICE EXAM

The Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning offers a variety of workshops on Lockdown Browser before and during the semester. Attending one of these workshops will ensure you are familiar with the technology as well as the best practices for avoiding common mistakes when using Lockdown Browser. If you cannot attend a training, you can watch the [recording](#).

## 2. REVIEW INFORMATION ON OUR KNOWLEDGE BASE

**Information on using Lockdown Browser is also available on our confluence knowledge base.** You can access this by going to your institution page on HuskyCT and selecting "Instructor Help."



Welcome to HuskyCT!

HuskyCT is UConn's learning management system about HuskyCT, as well as useful links to find c

The main menu on the left-hand side of the sc HuskyCT, and any course or non-class site you

If you have any questions about HuskyCT, ple

[The new Instructor Help online resources](#)  
[The new Student Help online resources](#)

**Set up a no-stakes practice exam that students can take as many times as they want throughout the semester to ensure that they do not have technical difficulty.** If they change computers or make any changes to their computer—such as upgrading the operating system or changing settings—they should test their equipment again.

## 4. VERIFY YOUR VERSION

Make sure students install the UConn version of Lockdown Browser—other versions will not work.

## 5. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Remind your students of the technical requirements of Lockdown Browser which include needing a strong internet connection and a working webcam.

## 6. USE RECOMMENDED SETTINGS

Lockdown Browser requires specific settings to function properly. These settings include the following:

1. Do not select force completion
2. Do not touch the password field in test settings (do not edit, add, or delete the password)
3. Use "display all at once" for question settings

## 7. FINISH YOUR TEST

Be sure to completely finish building your exam prior to turning on those settings.

## 8. KNOW THESE STEPS

Some settings are crucial for troubleshooting Lockdown Browser mistakes.

### Clear Test Attempt:

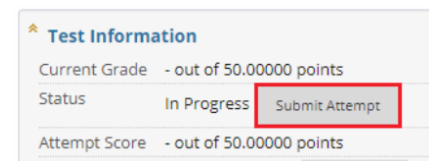
1. Access your Grade Center
2. Locate the column for the student's test
3. Click the drop down arrow and select "view grade details"



4. Select "Clear Attempt" on the following page.

### Force Submission:

1. Access your Grade Center
2. Locate the column for the student's test
3. Select the blue "in progress" symbol
4. Expand the menu by selecting "test information"
5. Select "Submit Attempt"



## 9. ALWAYS HAVE A BACKUP PLAN

**In the case that Lockdown Browser fails to work, make sure you have a backup solution.** Be prepared to manually monitor some students using Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Webex, or Blackboard Collaborate.