Blackboard collaborate™
web conferencing

Version 12.6

Blackboard Collaborate Launcher

Quick Reference Guide

May 2, 2014

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About the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher

The Blackboard Collaborate Launcher is a utility for Windows and Mac that provides a convenient and reliable way for you to launch your Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing sessions and recordings. When you click on a session or recording link, Blackboard Collaborate checks to see if you have the launcher installed and, if you don't, prompts you to download it.

When the launcher is installed, clicking a session or recording link triggers the download of a .collab file. The launcher uses this file to launch Blackboard Collaborate using a known and stable version of Java. Because the launcher includes the required Java, you no longer need to install and maintain the system version of Java.

For further information about the launcher, search for "Blackboard Collaborate Launcher" in our Support Knowledge Base.

Using the Launcher on Windows

Refer to the topics below for help using the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher.

> **Note for Windows 8.x users:** All instructions in this guide are given for users in the Desktop view. If currently in the Metro view, please switch to Desktop view so you can follow these instructions.

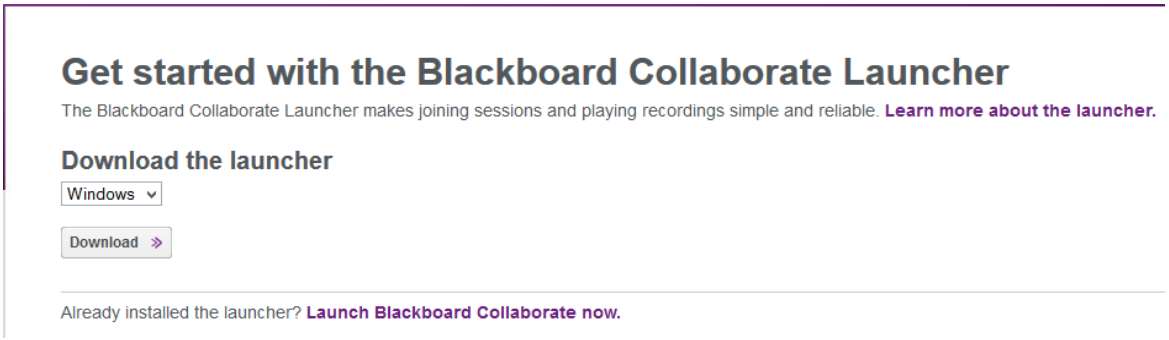
Installing the Launcher on Windows

If you haven't already installed the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher, Blackboard Collaborate prompts you to download it when you click a session or recording link. To download and install the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher, follow the steps below.

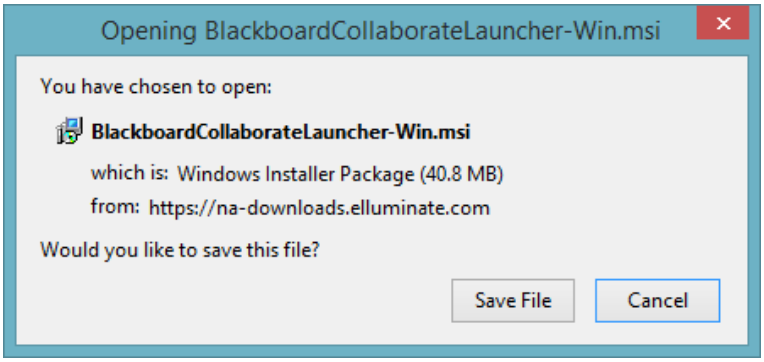
> **Note:** If you are launching Blackboard Collaborate through a Learning Management System, refer to *Using the Launcher in Learning Management Systems* on page 23.

1. When you click a session or recording link, Blackboard Collaborate prompts you to download the launcher. If not already selected, select *Windows* from the **Download the**

launcher drop-down menu and click **Download**.

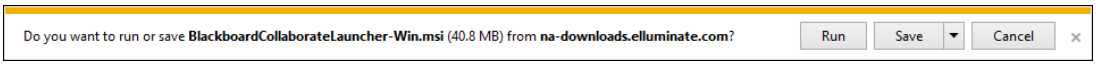


2. Run the Blackboard Collaborate Setup Wizard:
   - **Firefox** prompts you to save the Windows installer `BlackboardCollaborateLauncher-Win.msi`. Save the file. The default save location is your browser's Downloads library. Open the Downloads library and, when the download is complete, open the file to run the Blackboard Collaborate Setup Wizard.



   - **Chrome** prompts you to save the Windows installer `BlackboardCollaborateLauncher-Win.msi`. Save the file. The default save location is your Downloads folder. In the bottom left corner of your browser window, Chrome shows you the progress of the download. When the download is complete, click on the downloaded file to run the Blackboard Collaborate Setup Wizard.

   - **Internet Explorer** prompts you to Run or Save the Windows installer `BlackboardCollaborateLauncher-Win.msi`. Click **Run** to run the Blackboard Collaborate Setup Wizard.

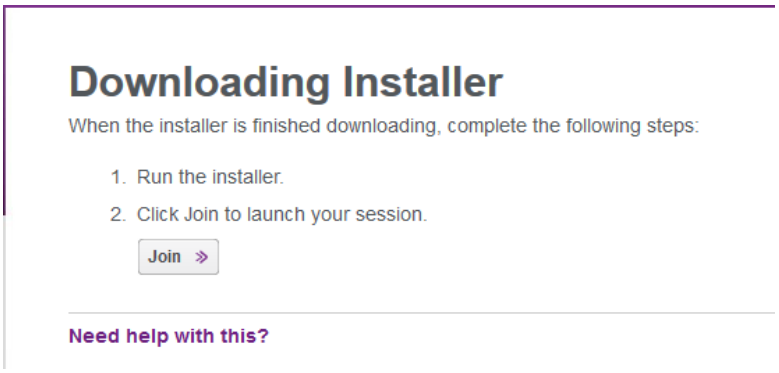


The setup wizard installs the Windows launcher, called `Win32Launcher.exe`, in the following directory:

```
C:\Users\<username>\AppData\Local\Programs\Blackboard\Blackboard
Collaborate Launcher
```

Note: If desired, you can move the launcher to a different location, such as Program Files.

3. When you have completed running the Blackboard Collaborate Setup Wizard, return to the Downloading Installer page in your browser and click the **Join** button (for sessions) or **Play** button (for recordings). For further details, see *Joining Sessions on Windows* below or *Playing Recordings on Windows* on page 8.



Joining Sessions on Windows

To join a session, follow the steps below.

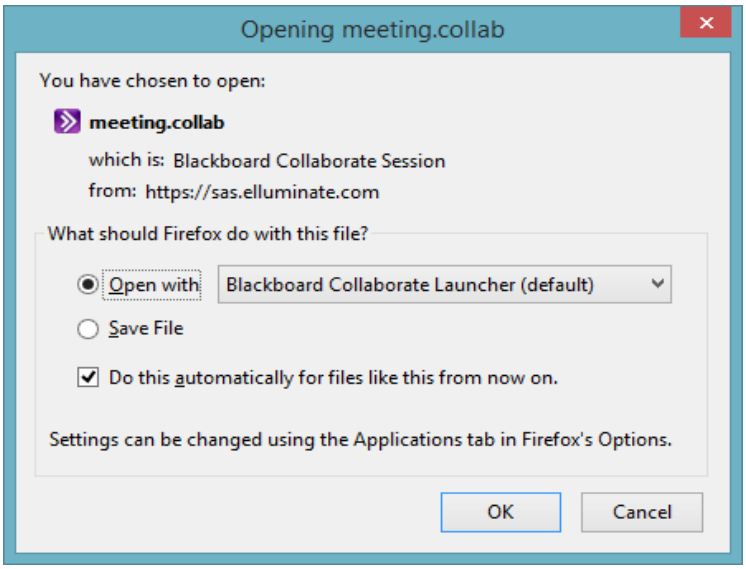
Note: If this is your first time using the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher, you will be prompted to download and install it. For details, see *Installing the Launcher on Windows* on page 3.

Tip: If you already installed the launcher but are still prompted to download it, click the link **Launch Blackboard Collaborate now**. This may happen if you previously cleared your browser's cookies or installed the launcher using one browser but now are launching a session using another browser.

1. After you click on your session link (or after you click **Join** on the Downloading Installer page), your next step depends on the type of link you are using:
   - If you are the session owner (the Moderator), you will immediately see the Downloading Session page.
   - If you are not the session owner, you are prompted to log in. Enter the name you want to use in the session and click **Log in**. The Downloading Session page opens.

2. Your .collab file is downloaded. It is named one of the following, depending on the type of session: `meeting.collab`, `course.collab` or `dropin.collab`. Open the .collab file:
   - **Firefox** asks you what to do with the .collab file. Select *Open with* and then *Blackboard Collaborate Launcher* from the drop-down menu. (If there is no drop-down menu, click **Choose** and open your Downloads folder to select Blackboard Collaborate Launcher.)

Note: The option *Do this automatically for files like this from now on* currently does not work. If you want to open files automatically next time, use Chrome.

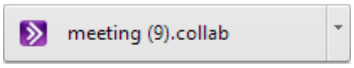


Tip: If you save your .collab file to use it again, launch your session by opening the file in your browser's Downloads folder. If you have more than one .collab file in the Downloads folder, the one at the top of the list is the one most recently downloaded.

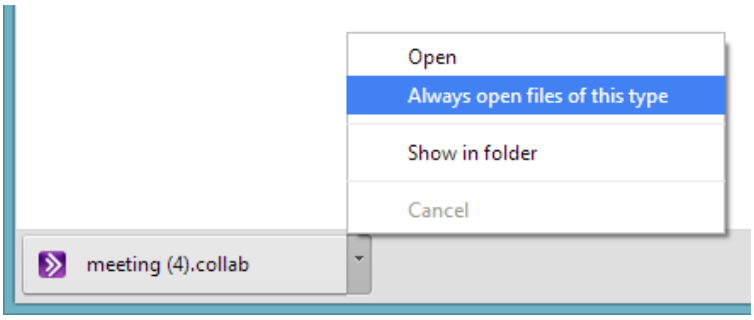
- **Internet Explorer** asks you what to do with the .collab file. Click **Open** or, if you want to reuse the file later, select **Save and open**.

> **Tip:** If you save your .collab file to use it again, launch your session by opening the file in your browser's Downloads folder. If you have more than one .collab file in the Downloads folder, the one at the top of the list is the one most recently downloaded.

- **Chrome** presents you with the file at the bottom of your browser window. Click on the file name.



If you want future session files to open automatically, select *Always open files of this type* from the menu and then double-click the file name.



> **Tip:** If Chrome prompts you to Save the file instead, the Chrome option *Ask where to save each file before downloading* is enabled. To disable it, open Chrome Settings, select *Show advanced settings...,* and scroll to the Downloads section.

Your session will now open.

Playing Recordings on Windows

To play a recording, follow the steps below.

> **Note:** If this is your first time using the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher, you will be prompted to download and install it. When you are done installing it, click **Play** on the Downloading Installer page.

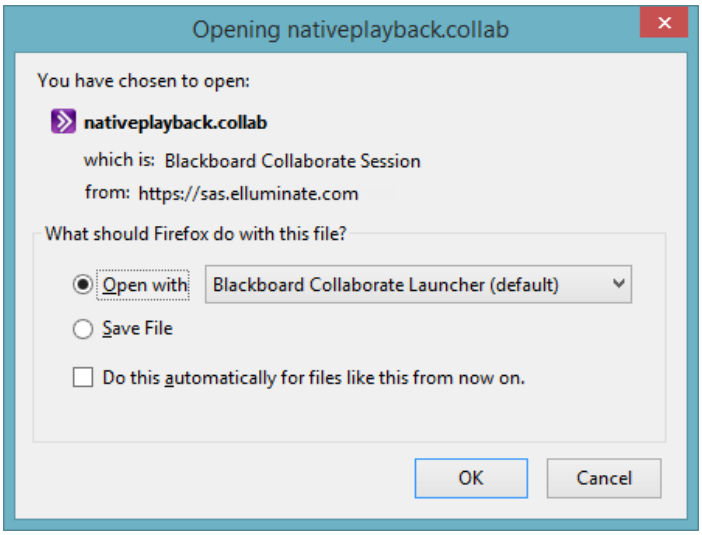
Tip: If you already installed the launcher but are still prompted to download it, click the link **Launch Blackboard Collaborate now**. This may happen if you previously cleared your browser's cookies or installed the launcher using one browser but now are launching a session using another browser.

1. After you click on your recording link (or after you click **Play** on the Downloading Installer page), your next step depends on how the recording is configured and whether or not you are the recording owner:
   - If you are recording owner, or if the recording is not configured to prompt you for information, you will immediately see the Downloading Recording page.
   - If you are not the recording owner, you **may** be prompted for some information about yourself. If so, enter your name and/or email address and click **View Recording**. The Downloading Recording page opens.

2. Your .collab file (either `play.collab` or `nativeplayback.collab`) is downloaded. Your next step depends on which browser you are using:

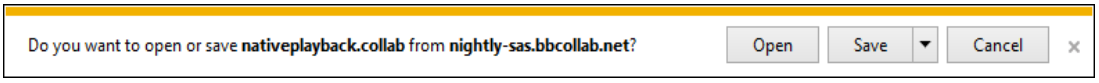
   - **Firefox** asks you what to do with the .collab file. Select *Open with* and then *Blackboard Collaborate Launcher* from the drop-down menu. (If there is no drop-down menu, click **Choose** and open your Downloads folder to select Blackboard Collaborate Launcher.)

     Note: The option *Do this automatically for files like this from now on* currently does not work. If you want to open files automatically next time, use Chrome.

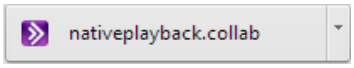
     Tip: If you save your .collab file to use it again, launch your session by opening the file in your browser's Downloads folder. If you have more than one .collab file in the Downloads folder, the one at the top of the list is the one most recently downloaded.

   - **Internet Explorer** asks you what to do with the .collab file. Click **Open** or, if you want to reuse the file later, select **Save and open**.

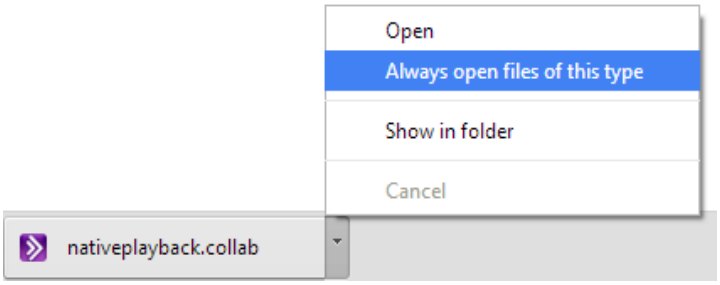
     

     Tip: If you save your .collab file to use it again, launch your session by opening the file in your browser's Downloads folder. If you have more than one .collab file in the Downloads folder, the one at the top of the list is the one most recently downloaded.

- **Chrome** presents you with the file at the bottom of your browser window. Click on the file name.



If you want future session files to open automatically, select *Always open files of this type* from the menu and then double-click the file name.



Tip: If Chrome prompts you to Save the file instead, the Chrome option *Ask where to save each file before downloading* is enabled. To disable it, open Chrome Settings, select *Show advanced settings...*, and scroll to the Downloads section.

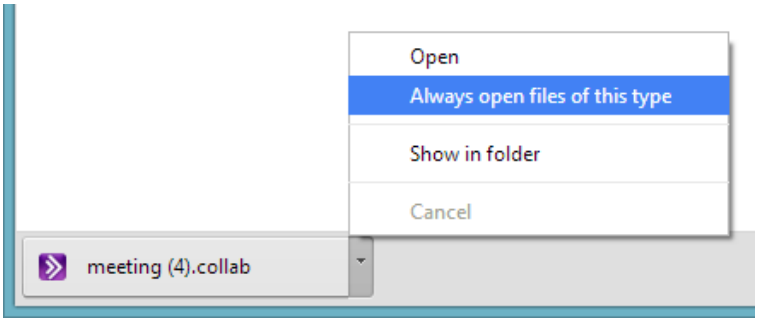
Your recording will now play.

Opening .collab Files Automatically on Windows

To automatically open .collab files next time you launch Blackboard Collaborate, use Chrome as your browser.

Note: This feature is not available in Internet Explorer and, in Firefox, the option *Do this automatically for files like this from now on* currently does not work.

When you download your .collab file, Chrome presents you with the file at the bottom of your browser window. Open the menu and select *Always open files of this type* and then double-click the .collab file name to launch your session or play your recording. The next time you download a .collab file, it will automatically launch Blackboard Collaborate.


Open
Always open files of this type
Show in folder
Cancel
meeting (4).collab

Using the Launcher on Mac OS X

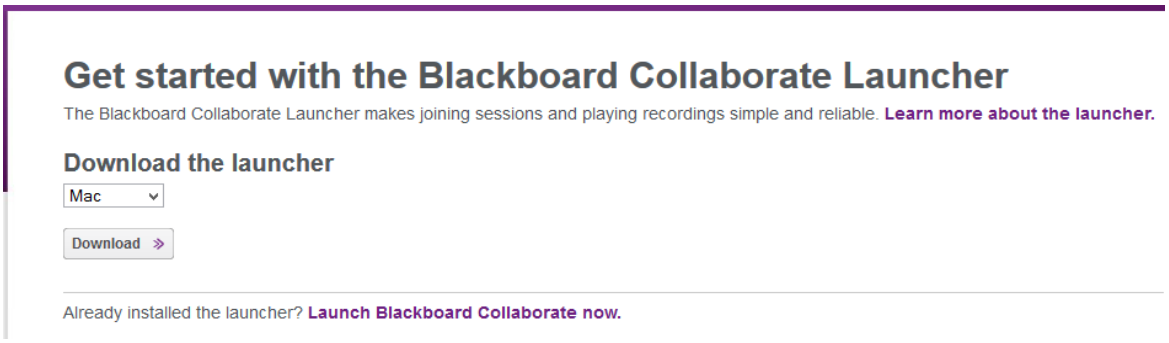
Refer to the topics below for help using the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher.

Installing the Launcher on Mac

If you haven't already installed the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher, Blackboard Collaborate prompts you to download it when you click a session or recording link. To download and install the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher, follow the steps below.

Note: If you are launching Blackboard Collaborate through a Learning Management System, refer to *Using the Launcher in Learning Management Systems* on page 23.

1. When you click a session or recording link, Blackboard Collaborate prompts you to download the launcher. If not already selected, select *Mac* from the **Download the launcher** drop-down menu and click **Download**.



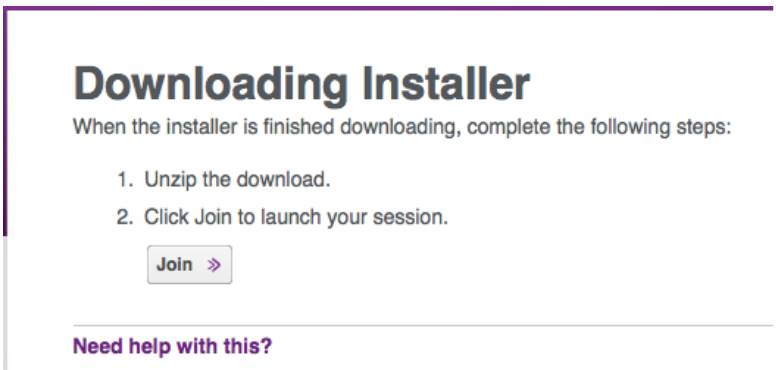
2. When the installer zip file `BlackboardCollaborateLauncher-Mac.zip` is fully downloaded, unzip the file to install the launcher.
   - **Safari** automatically unzips the file and installs the launcher. No further action is required.
   - In **Firefox and Chrome**, open the .zip file in your Downloads folder to unzip and install the launcher.

     Your browser may ask you which application to use to open the .zip file. If so, select the Archive Utility (in `System/Library/CoreServices`).

   By default, the launcher will reside in the Downloads folder. (When you open your session or recording .collab file, you are given the option to move the launcher to your Applications folder.)

> **Note to Mac users:** If you are having difficulty with the launcher installation process, open our Support Portal and search for "Setting Mac OS X File Associations to open Blackboard Collaborate Launcher.zip files" to find a helpful Knowledge Base article.

3. Now that the launcher is installed, return to the Downloading Installer page in your browser and click the **Join** button (for sessions) or **Play** button (for recordings). For further details, see *Joining Sessions on Mac* on page 15 or *Playing Recordings on Mac* on page 18.



Joining Sessions on Mac

To join a session, follow the steps below.

Note: If this is your first time using the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher, you will be prompted to download and install it. For details, see *Installing the Launcher on Mac* on page 13.

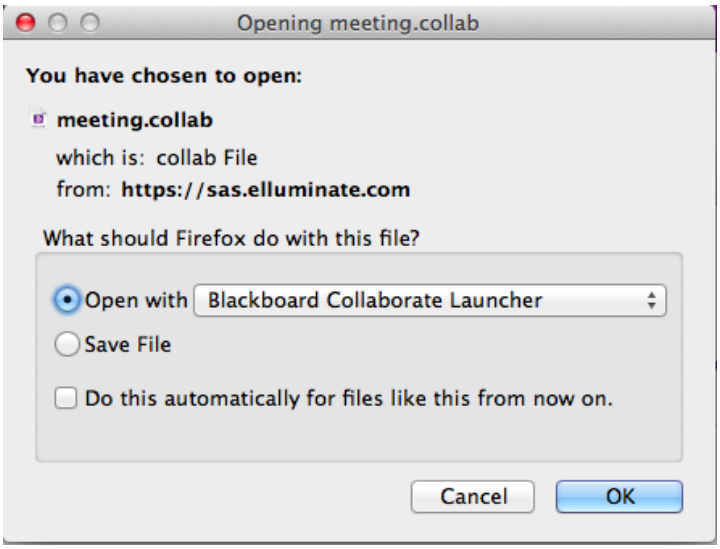
Tip: If you already installed the launcher but are still prompted to download it, click the link **Launch Blackboard Collaborate now**. This may happen if you previously cleared your browser's cookies or installed the launcher using one browser but now are launching a session using another browser.

1. After you click on your session link (or after you click **Join** on the Downloading Installer page), your next step depends on the type of link you are using:
   - If you are the session owner (the Moderator), you will immediately see the Downloading Session page.
   - If you are **not** the session owner, you are prompted to log in. Enter the name you want to use in the session and click **Log in**. The Downloading Session page opens.

2. Your .collab file is downloaded. It is named one of the following, depending on the type of session: `meeting.collab`, `course.collab` or `dropin.collab`. Open the .collab file:

   - **Firefox** asks you what to do with the .collab file. Select *Open with* and then *Blackboard Collaborate Launcher* from the drop-down menu. (If there is no drop-down menu, click **Choose** and open your Downloads folder to select Blackboard Collaborate Launcher.)

     Note: The option *Do this automatically for files like this from now on* currently does not work. If you want to open files automatically next time, use Chrome.

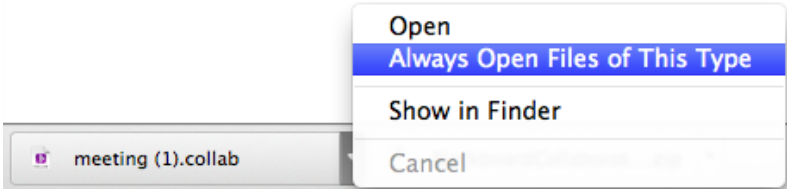


     Tip: If you save your .collab file to use it again, launch your session by opening the file in your browser's Downloads folder. If you have more than one .collab file in the Downloads folder, the one at the top of the list is the one most recently downloaded.

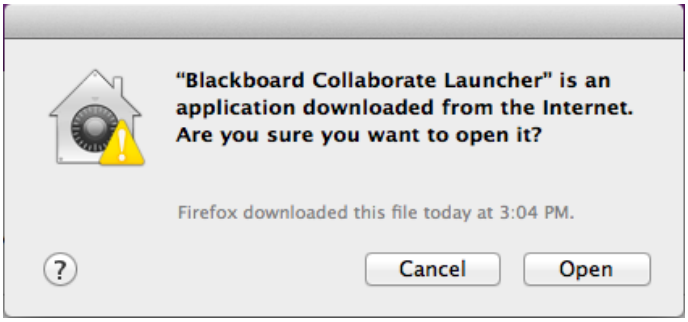
   - With **Safari**, open your Downloads folder and then open the .collab file.

- **Chrome** presents you with the file at the bottom of your browser window. Click on the file name.

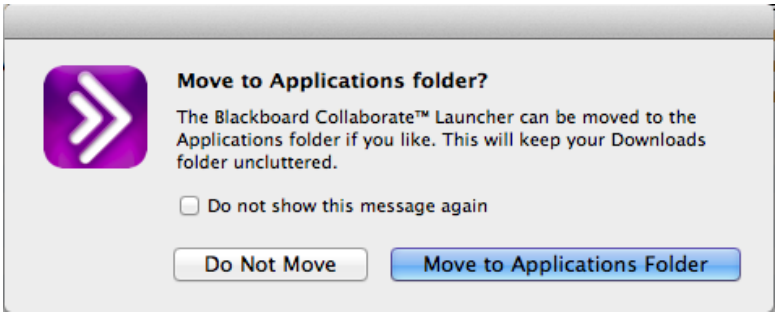
If you want future session files to open automatically, select *Always open files of this type* from the menu and then double-click the file name.



3. If this is the first time using the launcher, you are prompted to open it.



4. You are prompted to move the launcher to the Applications folder. This is not necessary but doing so will help keep your Downloads folder uncluttered.



Tip: Select *Do not show this message again* so you will not see this dialog next time you launch Blackboard Collaborate.

5. A Security Warning dialog asks if you want to run this application. Click **Run**.

> **Tip:** Select *Do not show this again for apps from the publisher and location above* so you will not see this dialog next time you launch Blackboard Collaborate.

Your session will now open.

Playing Recordings on Mac

To play a recording, follow the steps below.

> **Note:** If this is your first time using the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher, you will be prompted to download and install it. For details, see *Installing the Launcher on Mac* on page 13.

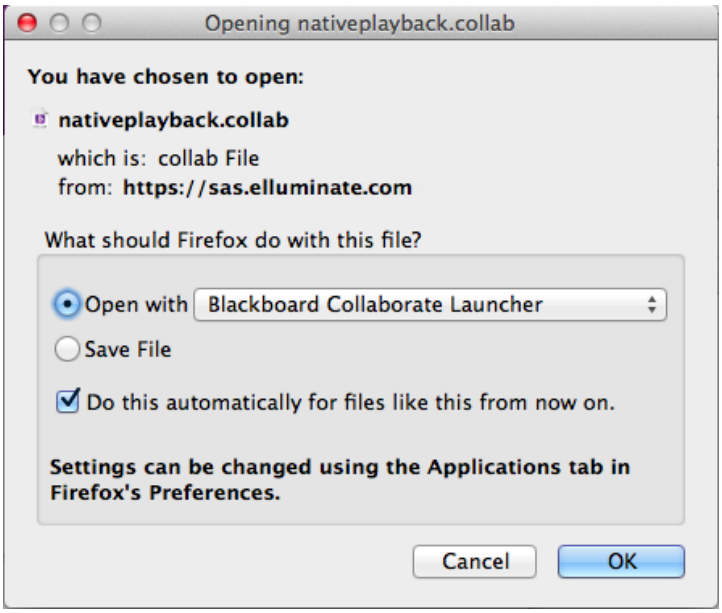
> **Tip:** If you already installed the launcher but are still prompted to download it, click the link **Launch Blackboard Collaborate now**. This may happen if you previously cleared your browser's cookies or installed the launcher using one browser but now are launching a session using another browser.

1. After you click on your recording link (or after you click **Play** on the Downloading Installer page), your next step depends on how the recording is configured and whether or not you are the recording owner:
   - If you are recording owner, or if the recording is not configured to prompt you for information, you will immediately see the Downloading Recording page.

- If you are not the recording owner, you **may** be prompted for some information about yourself. If so, enter your name and email address and click **View Recording**. The Downloading Recording page opens.

2. Your .collab file (either `play.collab` or `nativeplayback.collab`) is downloaded. Your next step depends on which browser you are using:
   - **Firefox** asks you what to do with the .collab file. Select *Open with* and then *Blackboard Collaborate Launcher* from the drop-down menu. (If there is no drop-down menu, click **Choose** and open your Downloads folder to select Blackboard Collaborate Launcher.)

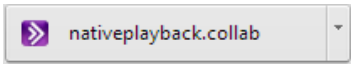
     Note: The option *Do this automatically for files like this from now on* currently does not work. If you want to open files automatically next time, use Chrome.



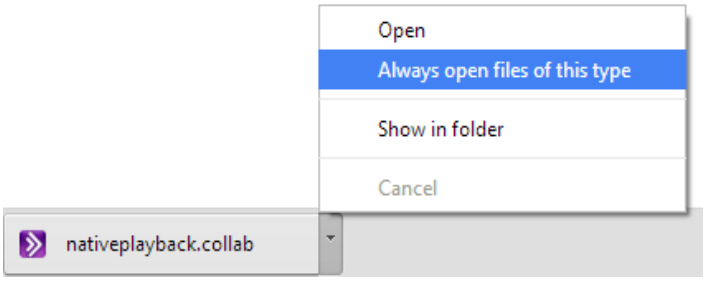
     Tip: If you save your .collab file to use it again, launch your session by opening the file in your browser's Downloads folder. If you have more than one .collab file in the Downloads folder, the one at the top of the list is the one most recently downloaded.

   - With **Safari**, open your Downloads folder and then open the .collab file.

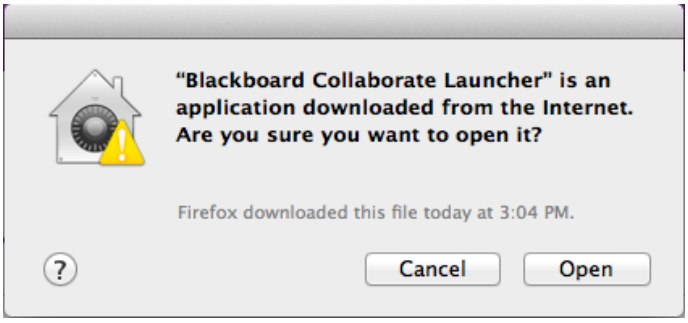
- **Chrome** presents you with the file at the bottom of your browser window. Click on the file name.



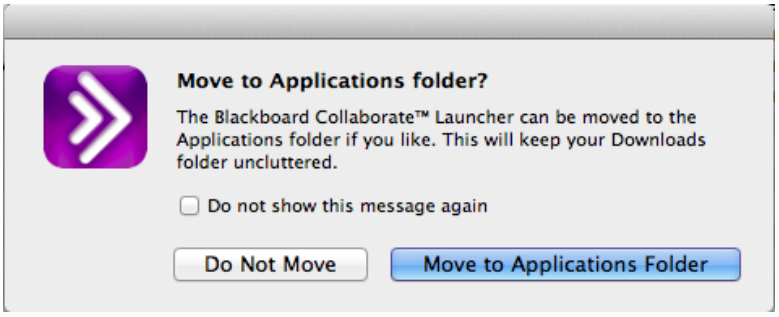
If you want future session files to open automatically, select *Always open files of this type* from the menu and then double-click the file name.



3. If this is the first time using the launcher, you are prompted to open it.



4. You are prompted to move the launcher to the Applications folder. This is not necessary but doing so will help keep your Downloads folder uncluttered.



Tip: Select *Do not show this message again* so you will not see this dialog next time you launch Blackboard Collaborate.

5. A Security Warning dialog ask you if you want to run this application. Click **Run**.

Tip: Select *Do not show this again for apps from the publisher and location above* so you will not see this dialog next time you launch Blackboard Collaborate.

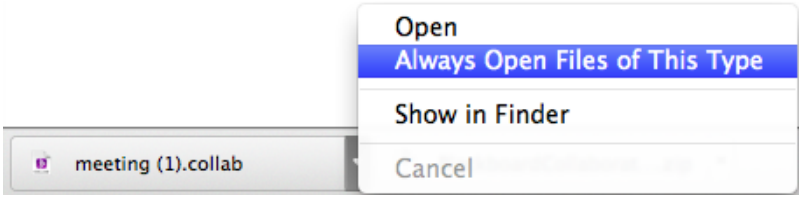
Your recording will now play.

Opening .collab Files Automatically on Mac

To automatically open .collab files next time you launch Blackboard Collaborate, use Chrome as your browser.

Note: This feature is not available in Safari and, in Firefox, the option *Do this automatically for files like this from now on* currently does not work.

When you download your .collab file, Chrome presents you with the file at the bottom of your browser window. Open the menu and select *Always open files of this type* and then double-click the .collab file name to launch your session or play your recording. The next time you download a .collab file, it will automatically launch Blackboard Collaborate.



Using the Launcher in Learning Management Systems

Except for the integration with Learn, all the Collaborate integrations with Learning Management Systems (Moodle, Angel, LTI and Sakai) use the SAS launcher workflow, described in this guide.

For Learn, open our Support Portal and search for "Downloading and using the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher through Blackboard Learn" to find a helpful Knowledge Base article.

Troubleshooting

If you are unable to launch Blackboard Collaborate with your .collab file, typically, either your operating system does not know what application to use to open this file, you have not installed the launcher or there was a problem when you installed the launcher.

Read the topics below, in order, to troubleshoot your issue.

For Learn, open our Support Portal and search for "Downloading and using the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher through Blackboard Learn" to find a helpful Knowledge Base article.

Note: For other issues, open our Support Portal and search for "Blackboard Collaborate Launcher Known Issues" to find the launcher Known Issues list in the Blackboard Collaborate Knowledge Base.

Confirm the Launcher is Installed

Check that you have installed the launcher.

- **On Windows:** The Windows launcher is called `Win32Launcher.exe`. The default installation location is the following directory:

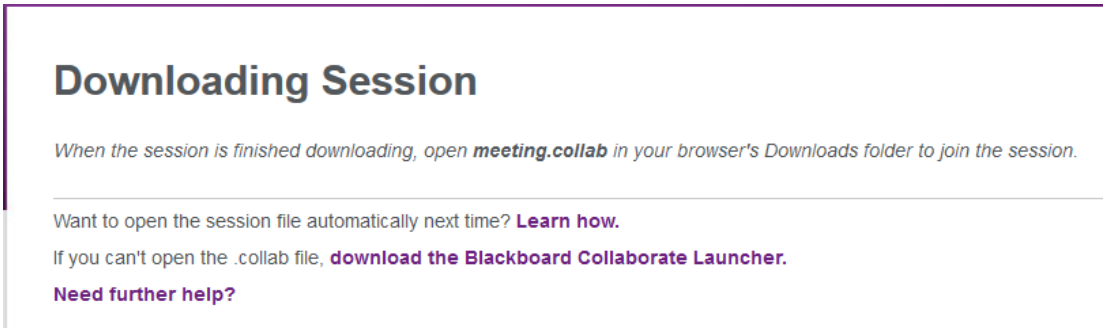
  ```
  C:\Users\<username>\AppData\Local\Programs\Blackboard\Blackboard Collaborate Launcher
  ```

Alternatively, look for the application `Blackboard Collaborate Launcher` in the Control Panel, under Programs and Features.

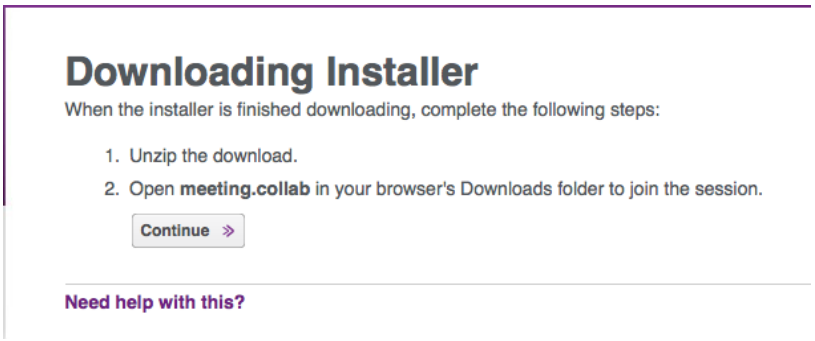
- **On Mac:** The Mac launcher is called `Blackboard Collaborate Launcher`. The default installation location is your Downloads folder. However, when opening a .collab file, you are given the option to move it to your Applications folder instead, so check there too.

If you don't have the launcher, and still have the Downloading Session (or Downloading Recording) page open, click the link **download the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher**.

Note: If you no longer have the Downloading Session (or Downloading Recording) page open, install the launcher following the directions in *Install the Launcher* on page 29.



Run the installer (Windows) or unzip the download (Mac), return to your browser window and click **Continue** on the Downloading Installer page.



Create a File Association

Your computer may not know what application should be used to open .collab files. Normally, once the launcher is installed, the file association between it and .collab files is already established. However, if for some reason the association was not made, you can make it either through your operating system or, if a Firefox user, through your browser.

Operating System

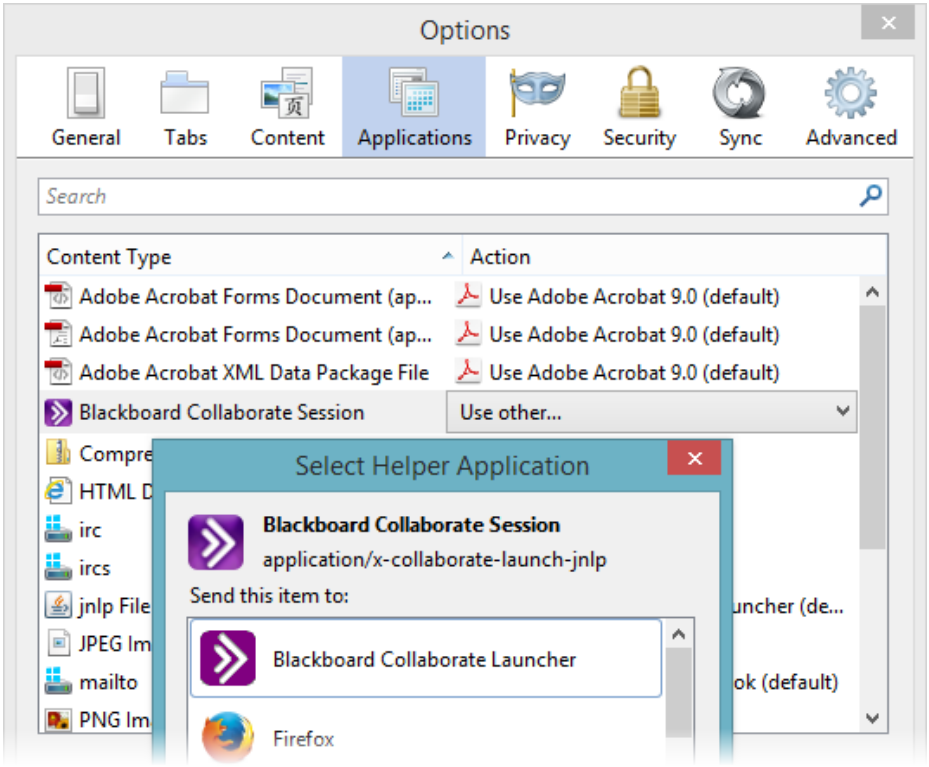
For instructions on making the file association through your operating system, open our Support Portal and search for "File Associations" to find a helpful Knowledge Base article.

Firefox

Windows

Create the file association through your Firefox Options.

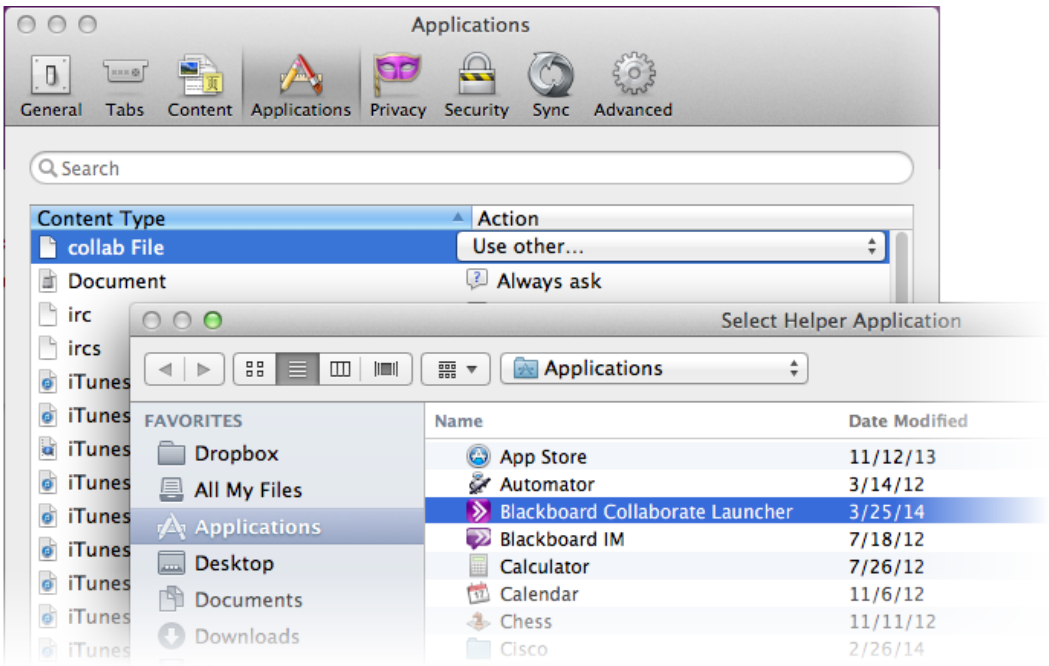
1. From the *Tools* menu, select *Options* and then the *Applications* tab.
2. For the Content Type *Blackboard Collaborate Session*, select the Action *Use other…*
3. In the Select Helper Application dialog, select *Blackboard Collaborate Launcher*.



Mac

Create the file association through your Firefox Preferences.

1. From the *Firefox* menu, select *Preferences* and then the *Applications* tab.
2. For the Content Type *collab file*, select the Action *Use other…*
3. In the Select Helper Application dialog, select *Blackboard Collaborate Launcher*.



Clear the Launcher's Java Cache

If the launcher is installed and the file association set correctly but you are still having problems launching your .collab file, try clearing the launcher's Java cache.

1. Open the launcher application. (For the location of the application, see *Confirm the Launcher is Installed* on page 25.)
2. Open the Advanced tab and click **Clear Cache**.

Reinstall the Launcher

If you are still having issues, uninstall and reinstall the launcher.

Uninstall Current Installation

Before you reinstall the launcher, uninstall the current instance of the installer as you would any other application:

- **On Windows**, open Programs and Features in your Control Panel and uninstall Blackboard Collaborate Launcher.
- **On Mac**, open your Downloads folder (or Applications folder if you put the launcher application there) and drag Blackboard Collaborate Launcher to your Trash.

Install the Launcher

Browser cookies keep track of whether or not you have installed the launcher. In order to be prompted to download the Blackboard Collaborate Launcher again when you click a session or recording link, you must clear your browser cookies. (For instructions, search for "clear cookies" in your browser's Help facility.)

Alternatively, download the launcher installer directly from the following URLs:

- **On Windows:**

  https://na-downloads.elluminate.com/bcl/win/BlackboardCollaborateLauncher

- **On Mac:**

  https://na-downloads.elluminate.com/bcl/BlackboardCollaborateLauncher

Note to Mac users: If you are having difficulty with the launcher installation process, open our Support Portal and search for "Setting Mac OS X File Associations to open Blackboard Collaborate Launcher.zip files" to find a helpful Knowledge Base article.

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