

For up-to-date information on available technology resources during the Coronavirus pandemic, see our [Computing Availability During COVID-19](#) article.

Video Conference Breakout Rooms

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Both BlueJeans and Zoom feature breakout rooms (called breakout sessions in BlueJeans). Breakout rooms can be an excellent addition to the classroom, however, using them effectively takes a little planning and some extra know-how.

Zoom

Zoom offers breakout rooms to split meeting participants in up to 50 separate rooms for group collaboration. For best results, all users need the latest Zoom app.

Here are ways to assign participants to breakout rooms in Zoom:

- **Pre-assigned** - Each person is assigned a breakout room ahead of time. This method is **highly recommended**. Faculty should use the directions below; staff and students should use Zoom's instructions: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360032752671>
- **Random** - During a Zoom meeting the host can push a button and randomly distribute attendees (including co-hosts) into breakout rooms.
- **Manual** - You can create breakout rooms during the meeting and manually assign students to rooms. This is difficult to do quickly, especially in meetings with larger numbers of participants.
- **Self-Select** - Attendees can choose their own breakout rooms during the meeting. See [this Zoom blog](#) for a more detailed description of this feature. More information is below in the [Self-Select Breakout Rooms](#) section.

Both hosts and co-hosts can create and manage breakout rooms during the meeting. Co-hosts can move between breakout rooms once they have been assigned to a breakout room by the host.

For complete information on the different roles in a meeting, see Zoom's article [Roles in a Meeting](#).

Creating Pre-Assigned Breakout Rooms in Canvas

The following directions are for **faculty using Canvas**. Staff and students should use Zoom's instructions to create breakout rooms: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360032752671>

Pre-assigning breakout rooms can make sending students to the correct rooms during a meeting quick and seamless. However, setting these up needs to be done with care, since **only Zoom meeting hosts and co-hosts can manage breakout rooms** and students **must** join the meeting with their Penn Zoom accounts for pre-assigned breakout rooms to work.

Creating Breakout Rooms Randomly or Manually

There may be times when you wish to create breakout rooms randomly or manually. It's a good idea to practice these options ahead of time so that you're comfortable with the process, since you'll be doing it in real time during the class/meeting. **Only Zoom meeting hosts and co-hosts can manage breakout rooms.**

Self-Select Breakout Rooms

It's also possible to allow participants to choose their own breakout room and move freely between rooms without the host having to assign them. When creating the breakout rooms initially, choose the option **Let participants choose room**. For detailed description of the self-selection experience, see Zoom's help article on [participating in breakout rooms](#).

Note: Both the meeting host and participants need to be on Zoom 5.3.0 or later to self-select Breakout Rooms.

Participant Options in Breakout Rooms

Hosts, once they are in the meeting, have a number of options they can set for participants.

For more information, learn how to [enable](#), [manage](#), and [participate](#) in Zoom Breakout Rooms.

BlueJeans

There are two ways to break students into groups using BlueJeans in Canvas. The recommended method will depend on whether the groups have already been assigned or they should be assigned randomly at the time of the exercise.

Breakout Session functionality is not available on Restricted/Authenticated meetings.

Note: Breakout sessions are **not recommended for office hours**. Instead, we recommend scheduling meetings with students (you can use Canvas Appointments) and create separate BlueJeans meetings.

1. The meeting organizer, or the person who scheduled the BlueJeans meeting, can use the Breakout Rooms app within BlueJeans to create up to 75 Breakout Rooms in a meeting if using BlueJeans application version 2.26 or above (if your application version is lower than v.2.26, you'll be limited to 20 rooms). Moderators can assign users to breakout rooms manually or automatically. (See the [BlueJeans article on Breakout Rooms](#).)
2. Each group can designate a meeting organizer and have them invite only their group members to the meeting. That student should follow the directions to create a [video conference in Canvas](#), at the beginning of this document.

Note: The option exists to choose which students to move into any particular breakout room during the meeting but this option is **not recommended**. Students have to be assigned to rooms one by one – which is time consuming – and the assigning can't be done until all students have joined the meeting.

Method one is recommended when the groups are to be randomly assigned during class. **Only the meeting organizer has access to the Breakout Session feature** within BlueJeans. If you would prefer someone other than yourself be in control of creating the breakout rooms, it is best for that person to create the class meeting within Canvas. This person will also have access to the moderator controls and can mute participants, as needed.

Recording Breakout Sessions

Each breakout session will be recorded if the original video conference had auto-record enabled (as is **our**

recommendation) AND that recording process was not stopped and restarted manually.

Only a meeting moderator –denoted by a star in the participants list – can manually start a recording in an individual breakout session. Keep in mind the moderator can only start a recording in a breakout session they are currently in.

Questions?

Please contact your [Wharton Computing representative](#).
