htw saar
eLearning

Instruction BigBlueButton for students

Content

BigBlueButton is an *open source* tool. Due to further developments, there may be changes and additions to this manual at any time. Therefore, please make sure that you are always reading the latest version of this manual.

Status: October 2023

1   Basics

Please test BigBlueButton early. Only then will you have the possibility to contact the eLearning team of htw saar in time before the start of the event and find solutions in case of difficulties and problems with the technology

The current support hours can be found on the Moodle homepage: https://moodle.htwsaar.de

You can also test and try out all the steps and simple functions presented in this guide before or outside your events independently of Moodle under the following links:

https://bbb-sl.htwsaar.de/bbbtest-de

https://bbb-sl.htwsaar.de/bbbtest-en

https://bbb-sl.htwsaar.de/bbbtest-fr

https://bbb-sl.htwsaar.de/bbbtest-es

2   Technical requirements

2.1   Browser settings

You do not need to install any special software for BigBlueButton, but you should use one of the following browsers:

BBB runs best with the latest **Chrome browser.** If not yet installed, it can be downloaded here:

Chrome: https://www.google.com/intl/de_de/chrome/

You can also participate in the virtual lecture on tablets (iPad and Android) using the Chrome browser. However, sharing applications or the screen is not possible on tablets.

Experiences with **Firefox** vary, some computers have problems with sound and/or video transfer. If not yet installed, this browser can be downloaded here:

Firefox: https://www.mozilla.org/de/firefox/new/

The **Microsoft Edge browser** supports the BBB web conferencing system only since the version (15.01.2020 Chromium-based). All previous versions do not support BBB.

For **mobile devices,** BBB works in principle, but it should be a newer and sufficiently powerful device. You should be close to the WLAN access point for the best experience.

BBB runs on the **mobile Safari browser** since iOS version 12.2+ and on the **mobile Chrome browser** since Android version 6.0.

2.2   Network connection

The most stable access to the Internet would be a LAN cable, but W-LAN usually works as well. A sufficiently fast Internet connection includes:

- At least 1 MBit/s download and 0.5 MBit/s upload rate

- Ideally, however, 5 MBit/s download and 1 MBit/s upload rate

A common speed test such as https://breitbandmessung.de can be used to check these values.

2.3 Headset and camera

If you want to speak in the web conference, you will need a headset as a participant. The use of external speakers and microphones built into the computer/end device is not recommended, as this leads to extremely disruptive feedback noise and unwanted background noise.

The headphones of smartphones are often suitable as headsets, but have only one connector where audio input (microphone) and audio output (headphones) are combined. If, on the other hand, your computer/end device only has separate connectors for audio input and output, an adapter is still needed here.

If you want the other participants to see you during the web conference, you also need a camera (web cam). The camera built into the computer or mobile device is usually sufficient here.

3   My access to BBB

3.1 Where can I find my entrance to the right BBB virtual room?

You can find the respective virtual room in **the Moodle course** you are enrolled in:
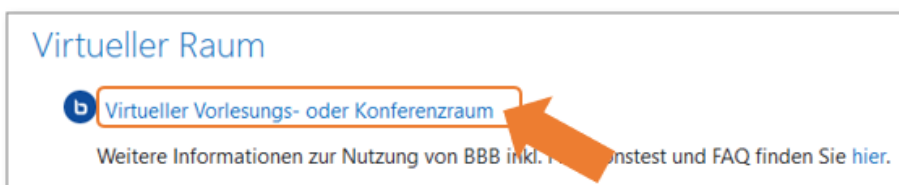
You can gain access by clicking on this button during the **specified seminar times.** Outside of the agreed dates you will usually not have access.

Furthermore, lecturers, employees and students of htw saar can also create BBB rooms outside of Moodle via the so-called BBB Manager. Here, one receives a link to the BBB room as well as a PIN to participate in such a web conference. There are separate instructions for joining such a BBB web conference. The following is about joining a BBB web conference via a Moodle course.

3.2 How do I get into the virtual room?

If you meet all the requirements as a student to join the room, simply click the *"Join"* button to join the event:
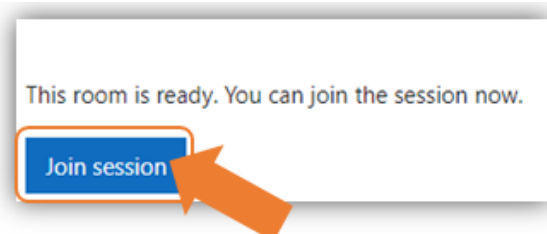

If the button is not clickable for you as a student, then it is not deactivated, but it is simply not possible for you to participate in a meeting at that moment. You will then receive the corresponding info *"You can participate when a presenter has arrived."* The presenter of a lecture (i.e. the lecturer) has the option of not letting students into the room until everything is ready. You may have to wait a little until then.

When you visit a web conference for the first time, the browser asks for permission to use the microphone and/or camera. You must grant this permission in order to work with BBB. The permission granted is only valid for the respective BBB web conference.

### 3.3   Joining the conference with sound (microphone)

Joining will open a new tab in your browser and you will see the virtual room in the background, but will first be asked via a pop-up how you would like to join the meeting:
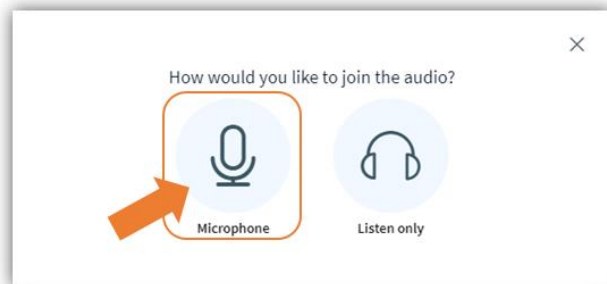

If you have a microphone, it is also better to select "**With microphone"** here, even if you have not yet planned to say anything. However, if you would still like to speak later on, you can do so by simply activating the microphone. If you select **"Listen only"** and want to speak later on, you will have to go through the audio setup again. Later in the meeting, please make sure that you **mute your microphone as long as you are not speaking** in order to minimize background noise.

If you are using a browser that supports automatic transcription (e.g. Chrome), you could enable it here in the desired language.

The next step is to allow your Internet browser to use the microphone:
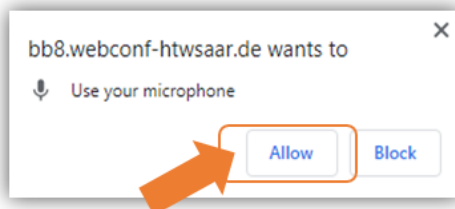
If you have chosen to participate *"With microphone"* and confirmed all dialogs, the following pop-up will now appear
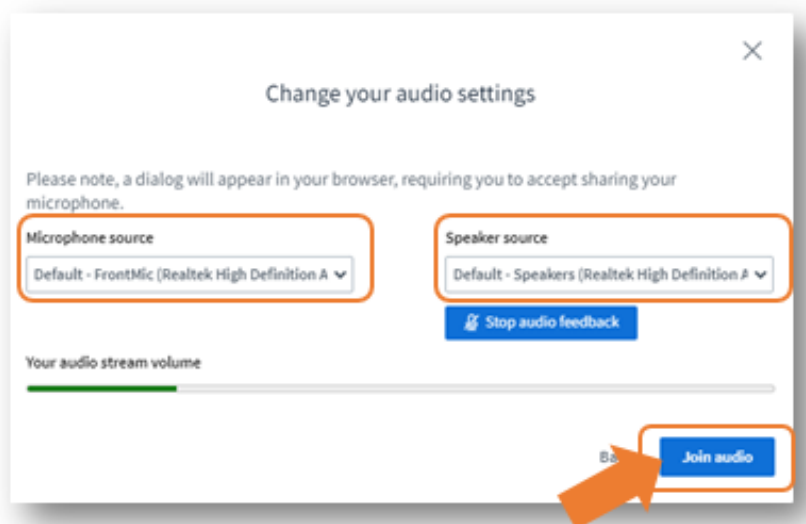
Here you can check if the desired microphone and speaker are selected. When you speak a few words, you should see a spike at "Your audio stream volume". After that click on "Join audio.

### 3.4 Joining the conference with camera and sound

If you chose to participate with microphone and the echo test was successful, you are now present in the conference room:
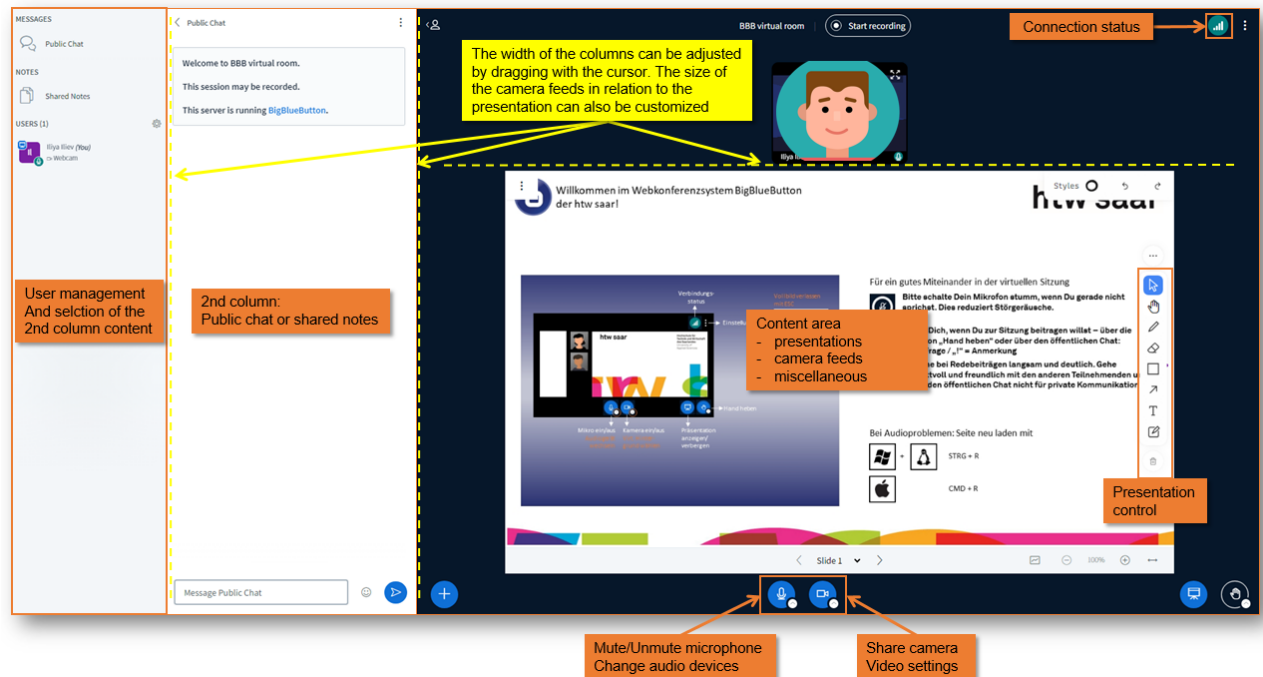
If you would also like to participate in the meeting with your webcam, then click on the round button with the camera symbol in the control bar at the bottom, which also displays *"Release webcam"* when hovering over it. After possibly renewed permission requests of the browser for the webcam (which you need to confirm), a new pop-up with webcam settings will appear. Here you can select the **camera device**, the **transmission quality** and a **virtual background.** If you see a camera image and all settings are to your liking, then click *"Start sharing"*:

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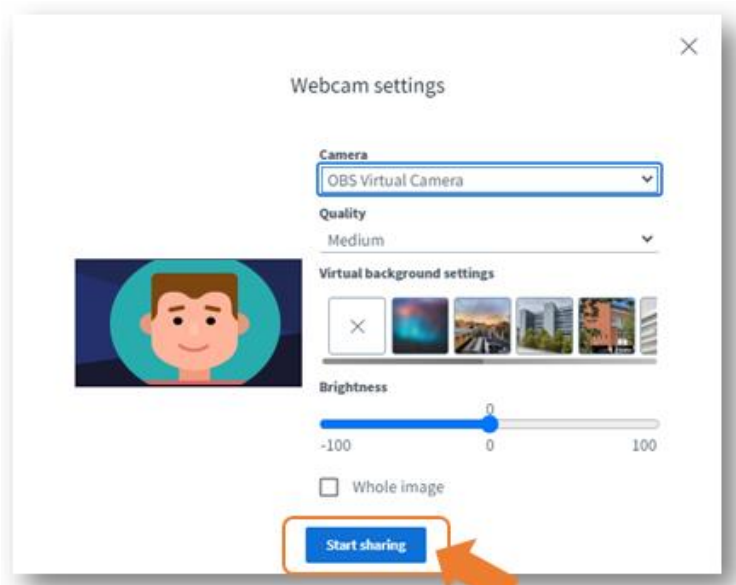
Your webcam image will then appear at the top of the screen above the presentation:
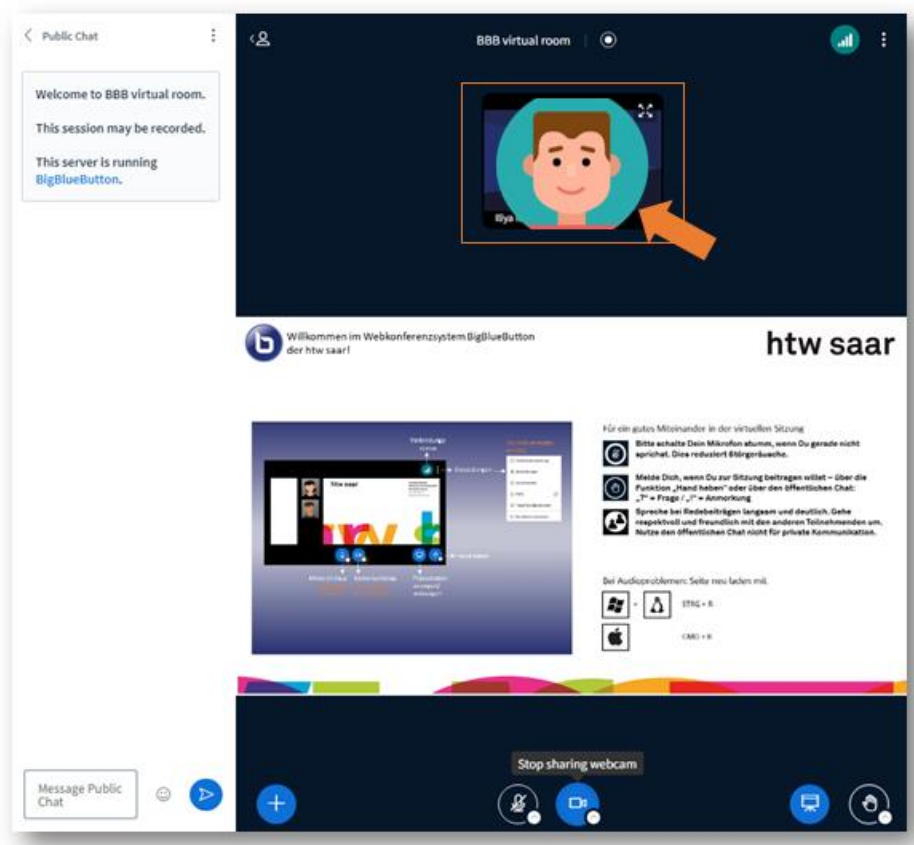

Please note: You can only share your webcam if the lecturer has enabled this function before-hand.

3.5 Problems getting into the conference room?

If, contrary to expectations, something (e.g. audio or video) is not working, the first thing to do is to check if you have granted your browser all the needed permissions. To do this, go to the padlock icon in front of the URL.
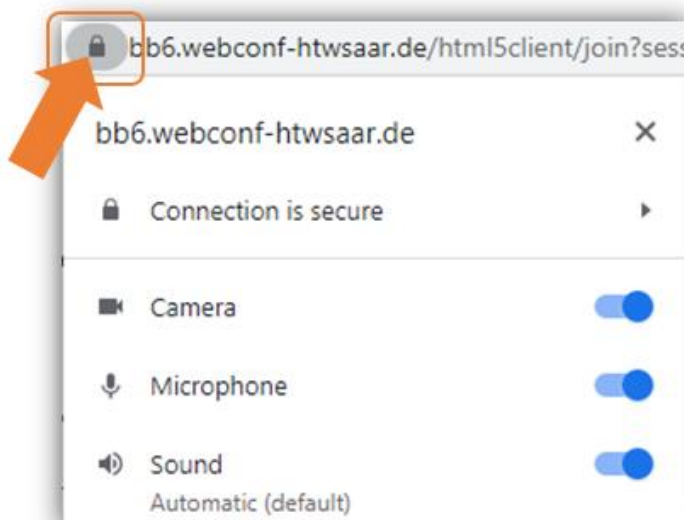
Furthermore you can change your input and output devices during the meeting with the help of the white arrows on the bottom of the audio and camera buttons. (Given you have more than one device connected to your PC).
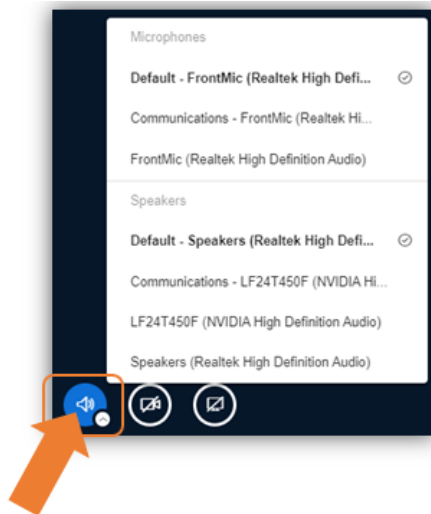
Also, check if the sound is turned on and the volume is high enough by clicking on the speaker icon in the Windows bar at the bottom right.

You may also need to select the correct output device here.

3.6 Video summary

You can also watch all the steps so far in this video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYYnryIM0Uw (in English)

4 My role as a participant

4.1 Audio/video transmission

As with any event in the analog world, video conferencing has some "etiquette rules." The most important one is that as a participant, when you enter the virtual virtual room, make sure that your **microphone is muted,** even if you should be there ahead of time. The lecturer will see who enters the room and will greet you accordingly. The same applies to the webcam, which you should also only switch on when requested to do so by the respective lecturer.

In addition, further communication rules can be agreed on in the respective events to ensure trouble-free cooperation that is effective for all participants.
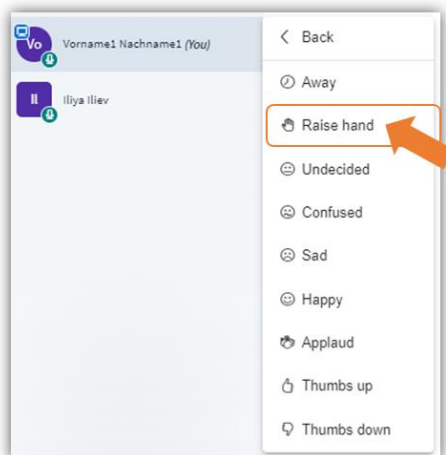
4.2 Status

In lectures or other events with many participants in the virtual room, but limited exchange among each other, interaction via the status icons is a good idea.

Example: A lecturer wants to convey study material online for a larger group. In this case, he is the only person who can be seen via the camera. However, he would still like to receive feedback from you as participants, e.g. how many people have understood the subject matter. The status changes are ideally suited for this purpose. If you click on your own name in the participant list, a context menu opens
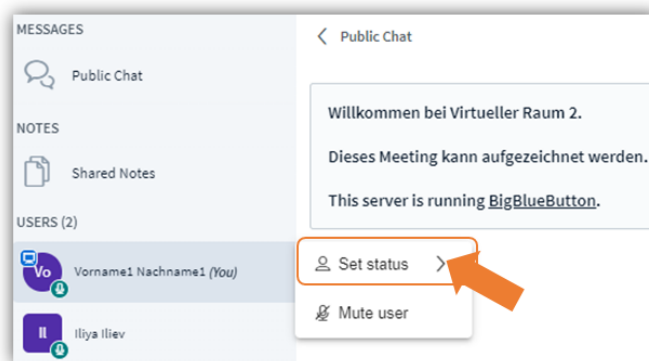
If you then click on the *"Set status"* menu item here, the context menu changes and shows the available statuses. Here you can select *"Raise hand"* here, for example.

This will set the status for you and your icon will change to a hand icon.
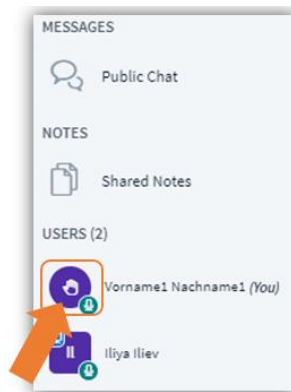
You can also remove the status yourself via the context menu, e.g. after you were able to ask your question.

Tip: Since the "Raise hand" status is used very often, it has its own button, which you can find at the bottom right of the controls.


When you click on the white arrow on this button, the "set-status" menu will appear.

Please note: In events with many participants, the participant list becomes very long. Therefore, the individual status messages can also quickly become confusing for the lecturer if they are changed frequently. A certain discipline of all participants is therefore necessary here. Thus, only use the function "Raise hand" when prompted by the lecturer or in accordance with the communication rules applicable to the event.

4.3 Chat

Through the chat, you as a participant can, for example, ask questions without interrupting the lecturer in his lecture. To do this, click on the *"Public chat"* area, then enter your question at the bottom of the message field and press the blue arrow symbol.
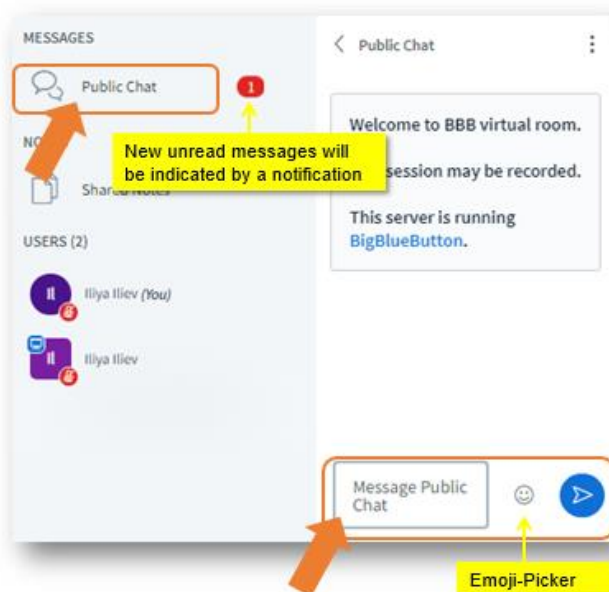
Your message will then appear in the chat area for all to see.

You can insert emojis into the message using the emoji picker.

Please note: In events with many participants, the chat can quickly become confusing. There-fore, a certain discipline of all participants is necessary. Thus, only use the chat when instructed to do so by the lecturer or according to the communication rules applicable to the event.

If you want to communicate with another participant, you can also start a private chat. To do this, click on the name of the desired participant and select the entry *"Start private chat".* Note however, that this function is only available if it has been enabled by the lecturer.

4.4   Shared notes

Below the *"Message/Public Chat"* menu, there is a field for Shared Notes that can be used by all participants. Here, participants have more space than in the chat, e.g. to ask more complex questions, to create a protocol or to record ideas. The notes can also be edited (e.g. bold, italics, underlining, structuring).
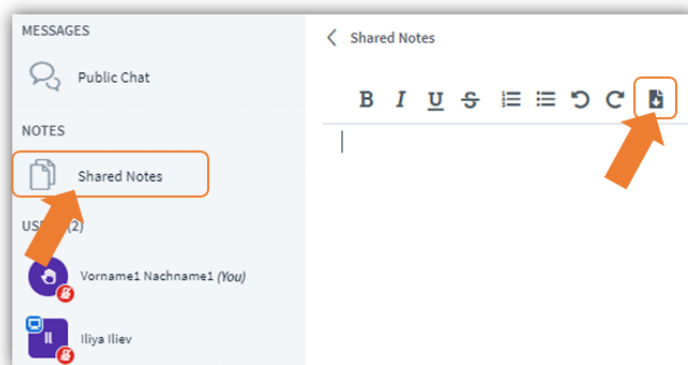
If you do not have the *"Shared Notes"* area opened, you can tell if someone is actively editing the notes by a red icon next to it.
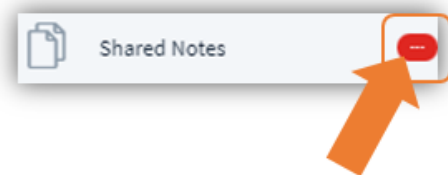

At any time during the conference, these notes can be saved as HTML and txt files by all participants. To do this, click on the icon with the double arrows. After ending a conference, the shared notes will be deleted automatically.

Please note: The use of shared notes also requires a certain discipline of all participants so that everyone can work in them on an equal footing and no information is lost. Therefore, use the shared notes only when requested by the lecturer and according to the communication rules applicable to the course.

4.5 Download teacher presentations

Under certain conditions you can download the current presentation of an event in BigBlue-Button. To do this, the lecturer must make it available for download. The download link for the file then appears in the public chat. The download starts when you click the link.
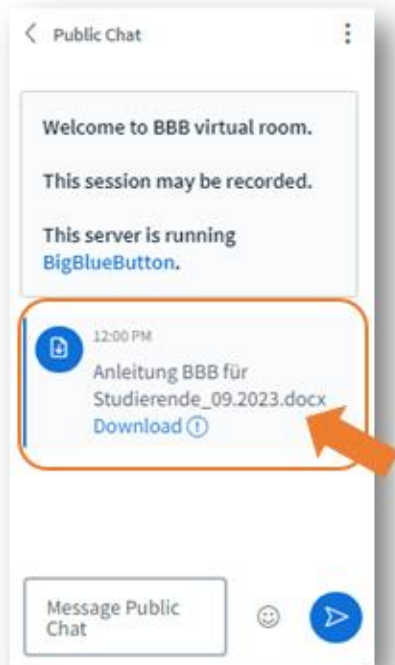

Depending on the settings of your computer, you will find the file in your download area under a letter-number combination.

4.6 Changing the BBB layout

You are able to change the appearance of your BBB interface in the settings. These are located in the upper right corner under the three-dot menu. To do this, click on the "+" symbol to the left of the microphone button and then on "Layout settings Modal".
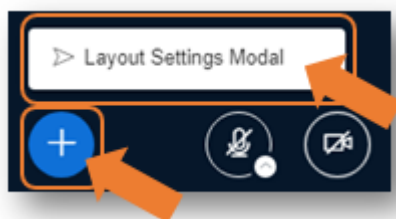
Select the desired layout and click "Confirm".
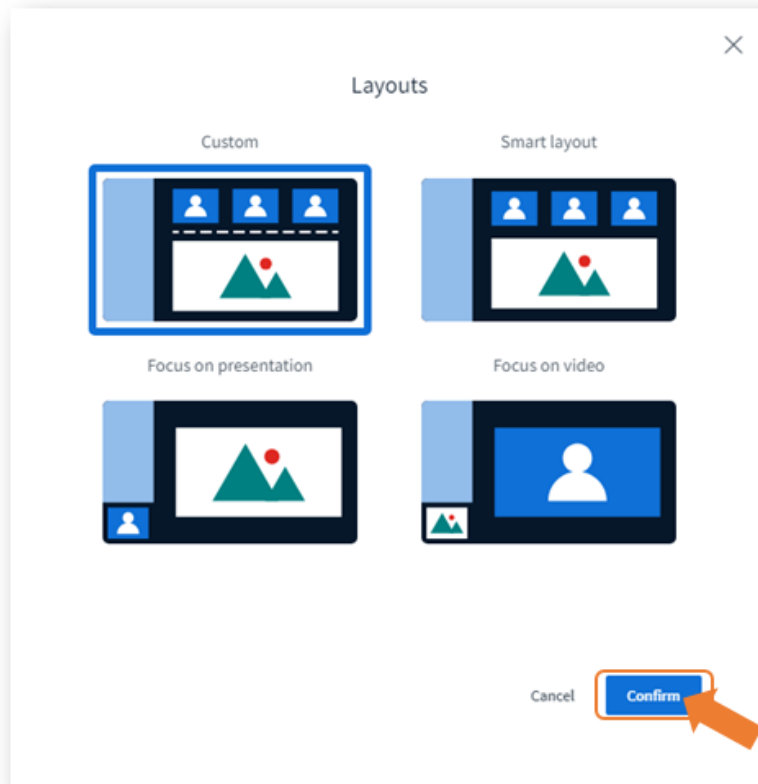
For example, if u have the "Custom" layout selected, you can then arrange the position of the camera images as you wish at the top, bottom, right or left of the presentation content. To do this, simply drag and drop the cadragmera image to the desired position.
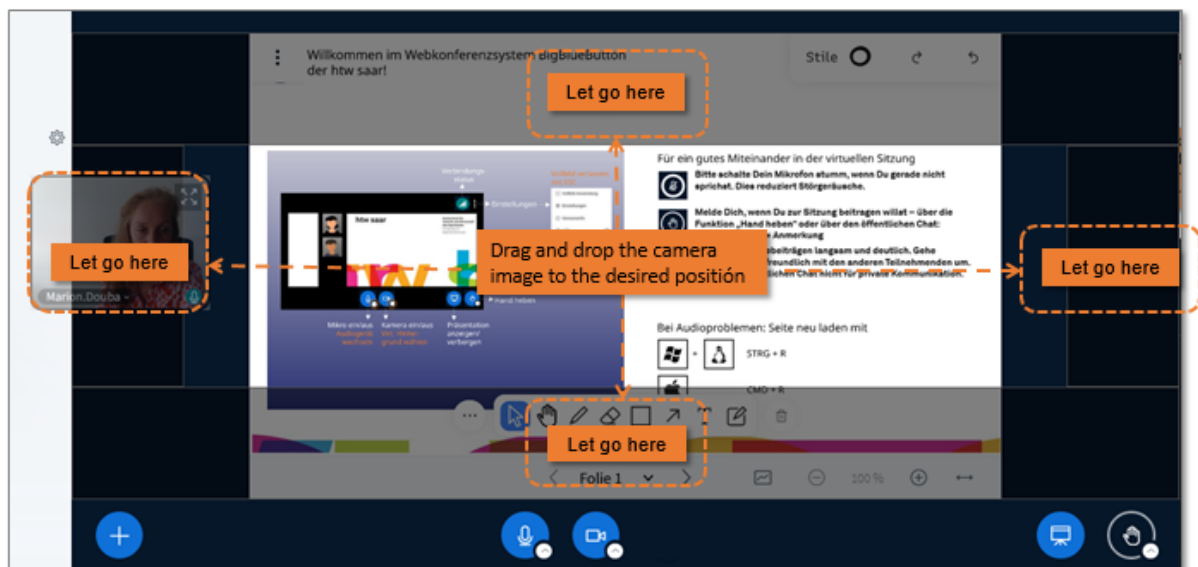

Please note: the mouse pointer must be positioned exactly in the desired area.

5   Become active as a participant yourself

5.1   Become a presenter

As a presenter, you are authorized by the moderator to give your own presentation in the ongoing meeting or to show content from your computer on the presentation area to the other participants.

You can tell by the small blue canvas symbol at the top left corner of your icon in the Participant list that the instructor has **assigned** you **presenter privileges.**
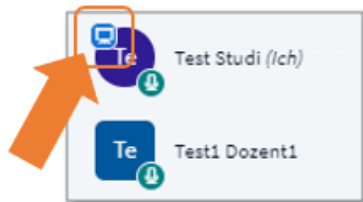
5.2   Upload my presentations - before and during the session

Just like in a face-to-face event, you can also give a presentation in the virtual room and show slides for it.

Please note: When uploading to BBB, the uploaded files are converted to graphics (one graphic per page or slide), which disables e.g. **animations** in PowerPoint or PDF.

You have two options for uploading:

- Before the event

You send your presentation to your lecturer in time and he uploads it in BBB. Then it will be available for you in the corresponding course.
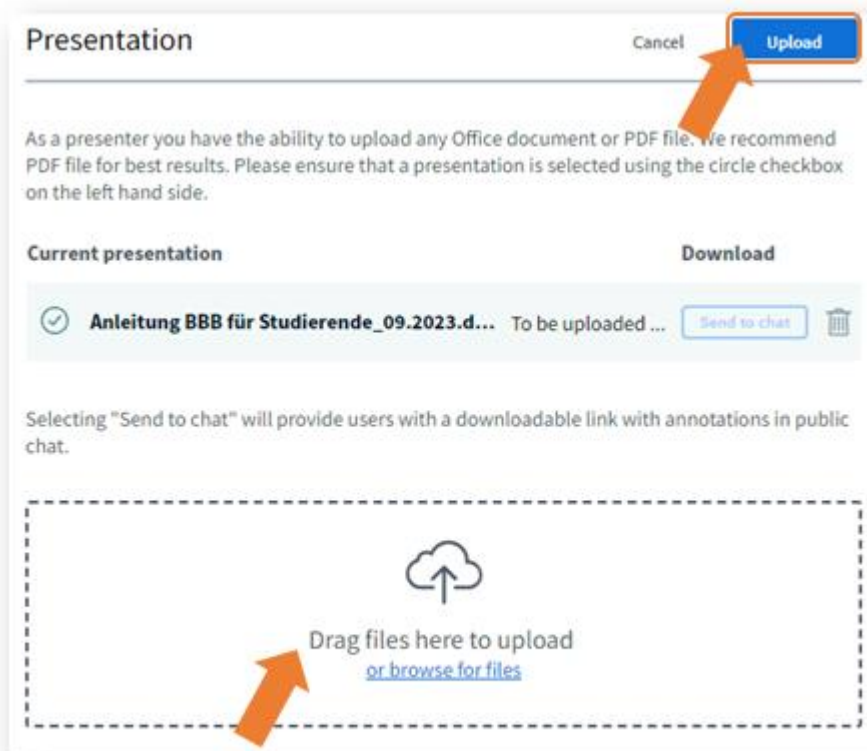
- During the event:

You have your presentation ready on the computer you are using to attend the event.

In both cases the next steps are the same for you: As soon as you have received the presenter rights from the lecturer, you will see a plus symbol in the bottom left corner of the presentation area. If you click on it, a context menu will open. Select the *"Upload a presentation"* menu item
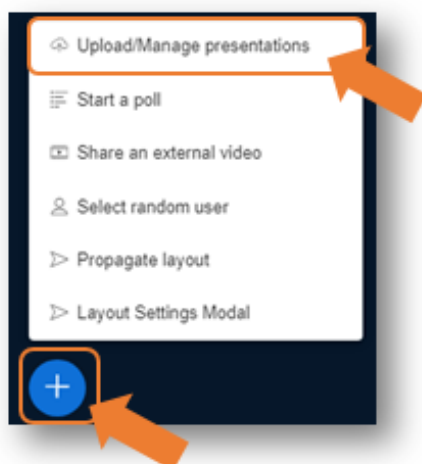
A window then appears (invisible to the other participants) with an overview of which files have already been uploaded in the virtual room and an area for uploading new files.

If your presentation has been **previously** uploaded by the lecturer, it will be displayed here.

Using drag-and-drop, you can also drag the corresponding presentation from your computer into the dashed box during **the currently running event.** Your presentation will then be converted by BBB, which may take a few moments. Then it will be ready for upload as well

You can also see which presentation is currently selected for display by the small green check mark. With a click on the *"Upload"* button this presentation will be uploaded to the current event. A progress bar provides feedback on how far along the process is. After the presentation has been uploaded completely, it will appear in the presentation area in the virtual room.

5.3   Share my screen - applications and whole screen

If you want to show animated presentations or information from your computer, then the "Share screen" function is more suitable. You must first obtain the presenter rights from the moderator for this as well.

Then you will find the necessary button in the control bar on the far right, next to the camera button. When you hover over the button, the text *"Share screen"* will appear.

A window then opens (invisible to the other participants). Here you can decide whether a specific **window of an application** or **the entire screen** should be shared.
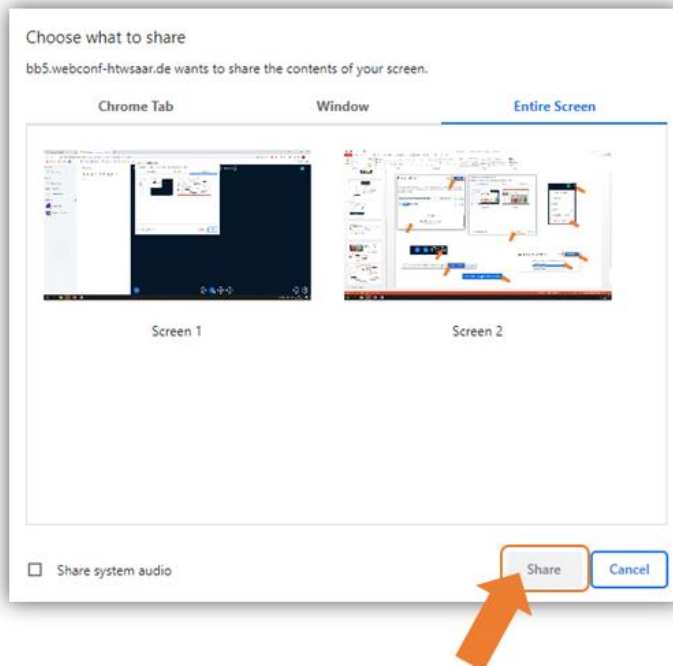

(Depending on your browser, this window will vary. Displayed above is Chrome).

When you have made your selection, confirm the decision with the *"Share"* button. Now everyone participating in the event can see your application (e.g. an Excel spreadsheet or a PowerPoint presentation) and you can work directly in the application or run animations.

Please note: Before you share an application from your computer, it should already be open, but in any case not minimized.

Share system audio: This option is only available in the latest versions of Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge. If you are using any other browser, the audio from your system will not be transmitted to the participants during screen sharing.

When you are done sharing your application window/whole screen, stop sharing by clicking the *Stop Sharing* button.
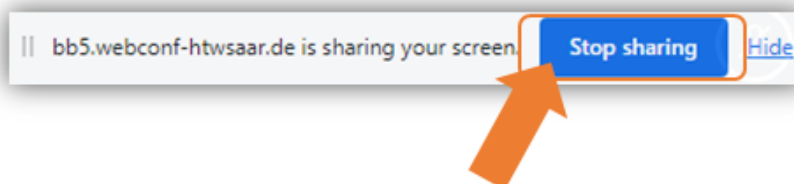
5.4   Working in breakout rooms

Breakout rooms are - independent of the main virtual room where the video conference is hosted - several, coexisting, but independent of each other, virtual rooms. They have the same interface as the main room and are opened **in a new tab**.

Only as a moderator or with the presenter right can up to eight of these rooms be created, which you as a participant (for example in group work) can either enter independently or get assigned to when the rooms are created.

You will be asked to choose a group room or enter your assigned room and go through the echo test again.
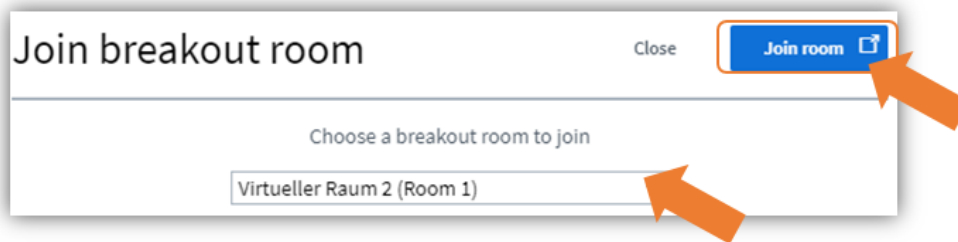
If you are assigned to a specific room as a participant, you can only see this room and the main room of the conference. However, you can switch between the two, e.g. to ask lecturers a question regarding the assignment. Your lecturer can enter all breakout rooms at any time to support you in your group work.

Inside the breakout rooms, all participants have the role of "moderator" and share the role of "presenter" for the respective room You can use all the features presented here (audio, webcam, chat, shared notes, upload presentations) just like in the main room.

In addition, a time limit is set for the breakout rooms, which is shown in each room.
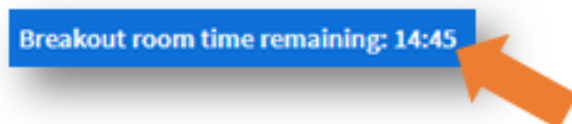
After the time has elapsed (or after early manual closing of the rooms), you as a participant are automatically brought back into the main room.

The instructor can set whether the shared notes as well as the whiteboard results are automatically saved at the end of the group work phase and made available in the main room. If not, you must save all necessary results from your breakout room, such as chat histories or shared notes, in time before the time limit expires. Closing the room will automatically delete all results.

Therefore, please clarify with your lecturer whether the results will be automatically saved by him/her.

5.5   Leaving the event

In the upper right corner of the presentation area, there is an icon with three dots. You will find the *"Leave Conference"* option on the bottom of the pop-out menu.
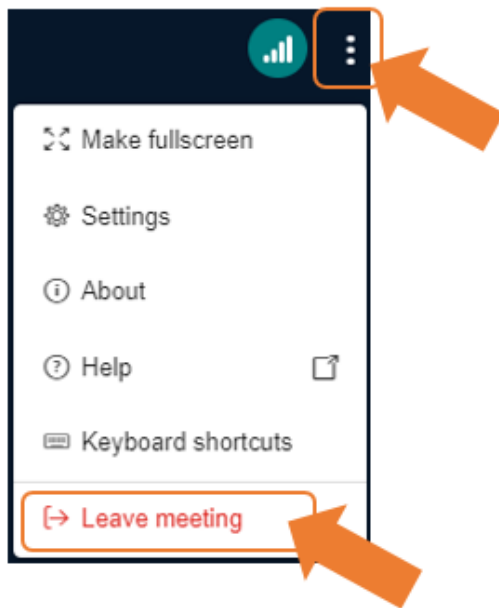
Use this, to get properly logged out of the meeting.