LiveOnline@UT (Zoom) – Leader Guide to Breakout Rooms

LiveOnline@UT (Zoom) is the UT branded name for the Zoom application. Zoom, a cloud-based technology, allows faculty, staff, and students to have high-quality interaction in real time from their computers and mobile devices.

Breakout Rooms are small groups that may be engaged during the meeting. Meeting leaders may choose to

- Allow the Zoom application to assign participants to a room automatically,

- Assign participants to a room via a manual process,

- Or, allow participants to self-select a room to join (all attendees must have the latest version of Zoom installed in order to engage this option).

The information in this guide will explore the following topics.

- How to configure and open Breakout Rooms
- Communication tools available in Breakout Rooms
- How to close Breakout Rooms

Getting Started with Breakout Rooms

Breakout Rooms may be setup and engaged by the meeting leader at any time during the meeting. Before engaging

Breakout Rooms, consider how and when you would like to use them in your meeting. The meeting leader may open, close, and recreate rooms at any time.

As the leader creates and rooms and chooses options, participants remain in the main room and do not view the process.

Please keep the following tips in mind.

- Breakout Rooms may be engaged multiple times during the meeting.

- Leaders may join any room at any time.

- Audio, video (webcam), chat, and share screen tools may be available to participants in Breakout Rooms.

How to Configure and Open Breakout Rooms

To get started with Breakout Rooms, locate the Breakout Rooms icon on the meeting toolbar and select it. If necessary, select More, and then Breakout Rooms.
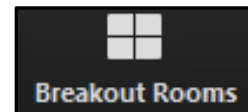
Next, the leader will be prompted to select the number of rooms and how to distribute participants to the rooms. The meeting leader may choose to allow Zoom to distribute participants to room automatically (randomly), assign

participants to rooms manually, or allow participants to choose a room to join.
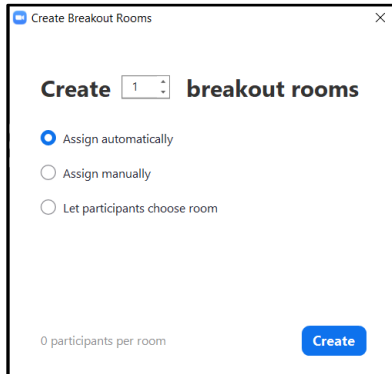

Select Create to advance to the next screen.

In the following examples explore some Breakout Room screens and available options.

In this example:

- Two Breakout Rooms have been created and the leader may assign participants to the rooms.

  - To assign a meeting participant to a room, select the Assign option. The options will expand to list the names of participants who are present in the meeting at the time (not pictured). The leader may add a check by the name of the participant and add that person to a room.

- Note the top of the Breakout Room window. The rooms have not been started yet. In this example, after assigning

participants to the room, the meeting leader should select Open All Rooms to engage Breakout Rooms.
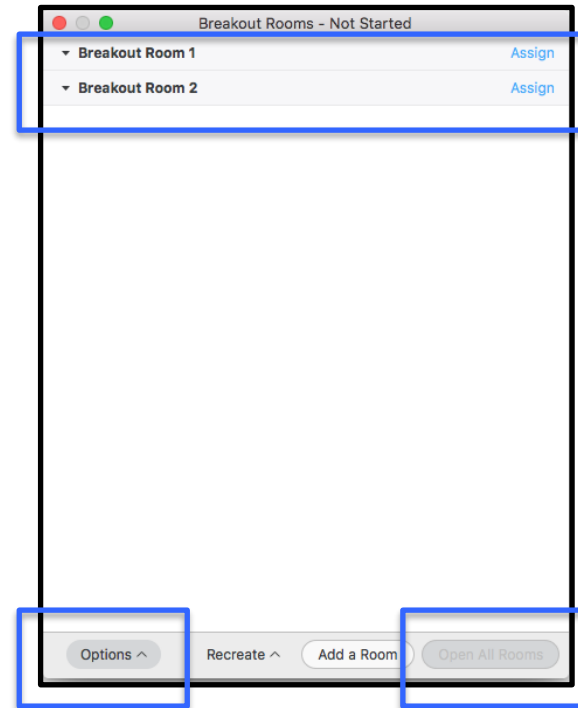
The leader may move the mouse over a Breakout Room to view some additional options, including the option to Rename or Delete a room before the Breakout Room activity begins.
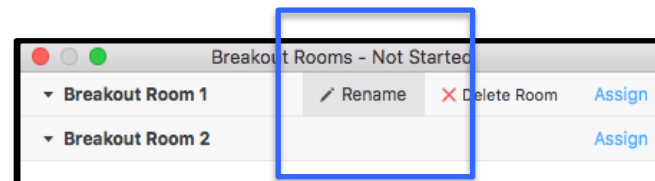
The leader may select the Options icon on the Breakout Room menu and choose timing and open/close options for the rooms. The options that are selected will apply to all the rooms.

The options include:

- Move participants into Breakout Rooms automatically – Choose this option to move participants into the room as soon as the Open Rooms icon is selected. However, if this option is selected, be sure that participants are prepped that Breakout Rooms are about to begin, and that they have clear instructions on their task or assignment while in the room.

- Allow participants to return to the main session at any time – Choose this option to allow participants to leave their room and return to the main room at any time. If not selected, participants will remain in the Breakout Room until it closes.

- Breakout Rooms may close automatically after [select] minutes – This option will apply a timer to the Breakout Room activity. Enter the number of minutes that the participants should remain in the rooms.

- Notify me when the time is up – Choose this option view a notification when the Breakout Rooms' timer has counted down the designated minutes selected in the option above. Zoom will prompt the leader to close the rooms or leave them option.

- Countdown after closing breakout room – Select this option to apply a countdown before the rooms close. Leaders may set the countdown timer for a number of seconds. This option can be useful in assisting participants in wrapping up any discussions, saving work, and prepping for re-entry to the main room.

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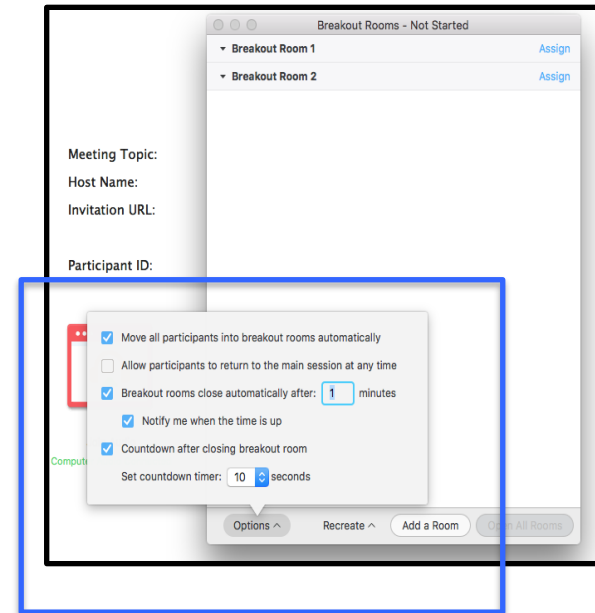
In this example,

- The leader has renamed the rooms and assigned one student to a room.

- There are no students assigned to the Green Team room.

- To start the Breakout Rooms, the leader should select the Open all Rooms icon.
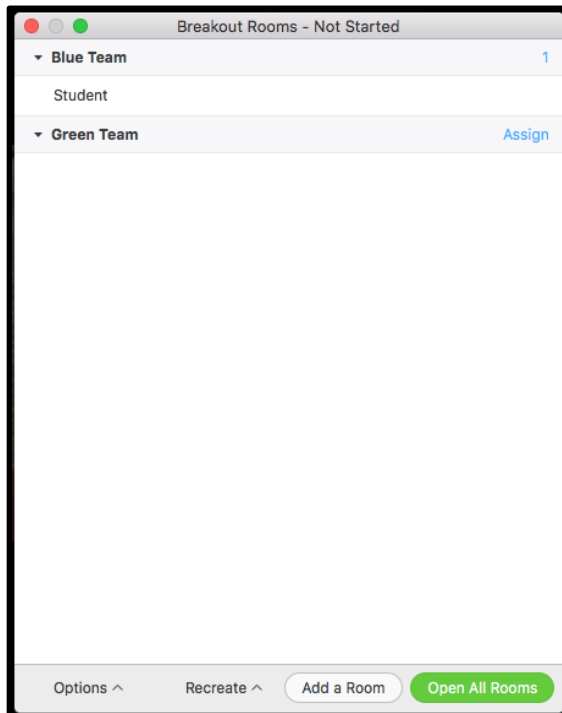
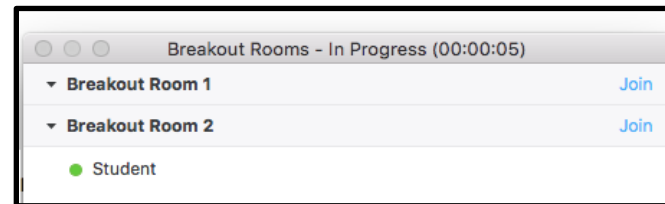
Communication Tools Available in Breakout Rooms

Breakout Rooms may include many of the same communication tools as the main room. For example, while in a Breakout Room, participants may use the following communication tools.

- Audio

- Video (webcam)

- Chat

The meeting leader may join a room at any time and contribute to the audio, webcam, and chat conversations.

Also, participants in each Breakout Room may conduct their own Share Screen activity (one Share Screen activity per Breakout Room).

In this example, the meeting leader may select Join next to any room and join that room.

*Additional Communication Tools in Breakout Rooms:*

- Ask for Help icon - There is an additional notification tool available to participants within a Breakout Room. Participants may select the Ask for Help icon on the

meeting toolbar. After selecting this icon, the leader receives a notification that the participant is asking for assistance in a Breakout Room. The notification will arrive at the leader's location, whether the leader is already in a Breakout Room or in the main room.

An example of the Ask for Help icon is available below.
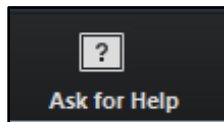
- Broadcast Message or Broadcast Voice to All Rooms icon – Meeting leaders may select this icon on the Breakout Rooms menu and broadcast a chat message or audio message to all rooms at the same time. The text message will appear at the top of each user's meeting window.
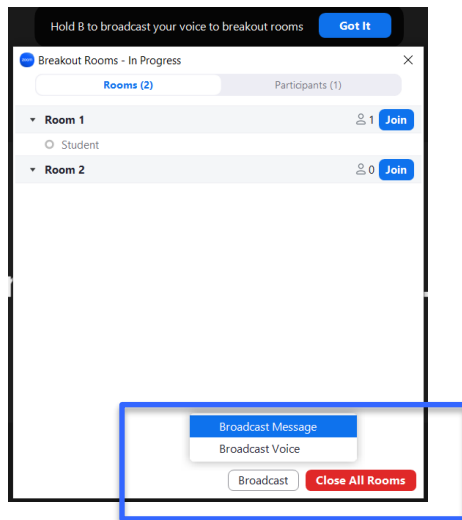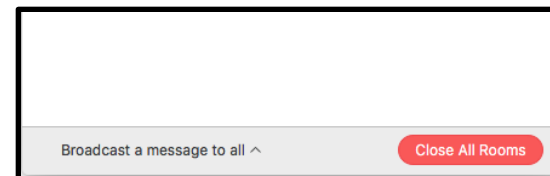

The image below is an example of a broadcast text message to all rooms.
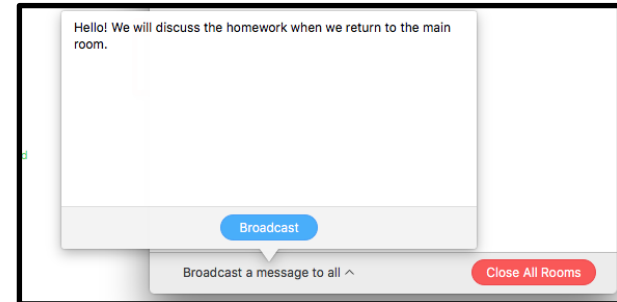

How to Close All Rooms

When it is time to stop the current Breakout Rooms, the meeting leader should return to the main meeting room. If necessary, select the Breakout Room icon on the meeting toolbar to reveal the Breakout Room menu.

- Select the Close all Rooms icon on the Breakout Rooms menu. Depending on the options selected for the Breakout Rooms, Zoom may prompt to close all rooms now, or, keep the rooms open. Select Close Now to end the current Breakout Rooms.
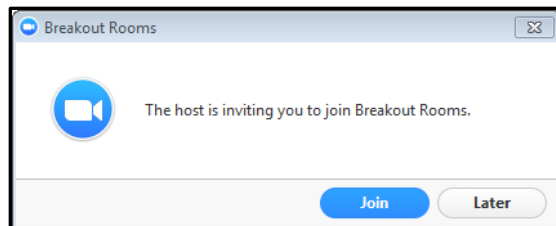
Breakout Room participants will join the main meeting room after a countdown (if this option is selected during the setup process. The countdown is usually set to a number of seconds).

The image below is an example of a prompt to close Breakout Rooms.
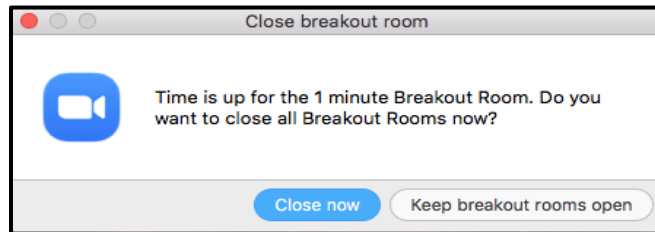
Additional Information about Breakout Rooms

- Meeting leaders may create Breakout Rooms at any time during the meeting.

- Depending on the options chosen for the rooms, participants may receive a prompt like the one pictured below. To join a room, participants should select Join on their screen.

- Participants may access the Audio, Video (webcam), Chat, and Share Screen tools in a Breakout Room.

- Breakout Room activity is not included in the main meeting recording. However, it is possible for a room participant to record the activity in the room. To enable this option, the leader must allow the participant to record prior to starting Breakout Rooms. The leader should select Manage Participants on the meeting toolbar and then move the mouse over the participant's name. Select More and then Allow Record. Then, once in the Breakout Room, the participant should select Record on their toolbar, and stop the recording before exiting the room.

- During the setup process, session leaders may choose how participants access the Breakout Rooms. The options include allowing Zoom to assign participants to a room automatically, assign participants to a room via a manual process, or, allow participants to self-select a room to join (all attendees must have the latest version of Zoom installed in order to engage this option).