Online Meeting Guidance

The following guidance is developed from a range of internal sources as a guide to chairs and attendees of online meetings. Not all steps will be required at every meeting. The guidance combines good practice in meeting etiquette, technical planning and how meetings can be as inclusive as possible. This document will be updated as features of Zoom, Teams and other technologies evolve.

(Please note guidance for converting this Word file to an accessible pdf file in which the embedded links will work: https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/digitalaccessibility/documents/pdfdocuments/).

1- Preparation

1.1 Agenda and Guidelines:

a) Send the agenda for a meeting in advance within a reasonable timeframe and ensure it is clearly structured. Consider if the content of the meeting is best suited to a face-to-face meeting, hybrid or a virtual meeting, in line with the physical distancing guidance and recognising the intention to support hybrid working. Ensure all attendees know in advance if the meeting is in person, virtual or hybrid.

b) As part of the meeting invite, ask attendees whether any reasonable adjustments are required. (For example, if Face-to-face, the room will need to be accessible. If virtual, do any attendees require a live captioner or BSL interpreter? If required these will need to be booked well in advance.)

c) If possible, all papers, including visual presentations, should be shared in advance.

1.2 Scheduling

a) Where possible, arrange meetings far in advance so that attendees can sufficiently prepare for them. If attendees live in different time zones, be aware of this and work to find a time that suits everyone, not just the majority. The World Clock Meeting Planner from timeanddate.com allows you to input your team members' different locations and then creates a table of suggested meeting times.

b) Meetings should start at five past the hour and end at five past the hour to allow for breaks between meetings.

1.3 Software

a) Consider which software will best suit your needs. Zoom and Teams are commonly used in the University. Teams may not work so well for larger groups due to limits in the number of video views on screen. Both options allow meetings to be recorded, which can assist with note taking if all parties present give permission to be recorded.

b) Ensure Presenters have screen sharing permissions.

c) If you are having technical issues, try switching off your video and using voice-only. Note that using a VPN when accessing meetings may cause technical problems.

1.4 Equipment

a) Use a headset where possible with a microphone built in and check your webcam functions properly.

b) You can also adjust your settings so that your camera image is hidden from your own meeting display screen, while remaining visible to others (currently possible in Zoom but not in Teams).

1.5 Etiquette

a) Arrive a few minutes before the meeting, if possible, to ensure your access works as required and to also connect with fellow attendees before the formal meeting begins.

b) Ensure your phone is on silent and that audio notifications are turned off for any applications (e.g., emails), especially if you are likely to be speaking for a prolonged period.

c) At the start of meetings, if necessary, allow everyone a chance to introduce themselves and state their name and pronouns. You are also encouraged to edit your Zoom profile to display your name and preferred pronouns.   (This function is not currently available with MS Teams.) See below in the Inclusivity section for guidance on how to do this. Some attendees may not feel comfortable sharing their pronouns straight away, so it is important to emphasise that this is not obligatory.

d) Communicate the guidelines for meetings to attendees, e.g., do cameras need to be on at all times, or just the Convener's/Presenter's? Should attendees be on mute when not talking? Will the Convener call on each person when it is their specific turn to speak? Decide in advance what you think is best for the meeting and then liaise with attendees for their input as well.

e) Encourage attendees to use the 'raise hand' feature or chat box if they wish to speak or raise a question. When a question is asked, it is also good practice to either repeat the question after each person has spoken or write it in the chat box, so all participants are clear what has been asked. If you are chairing the meeting, make clear how you wish participants to make known that they wish to contribute, if you

fail to notice their raised hand or question in the chat. (For example, you could indicate that it is okay in that situation for a participant to politely turn on their microphone to draw attention to their wish to talk.)

f) When speaking, make sure you speak more slowly and clearly than you might naturally do in person. If asking questions of others, leave time for them to unmute their microphone (if necessary) to respond.

g) When responding to text in the chat box, read out what the person has said and who has said it for the benefit of all attendees. Make sure to discuss with the attendees which options they are broadly comfortable with so that all are aware of the proper procedure for the meeting. It may be useful to ask a member of the committee to keep an eye on the chat box for comments and feed these back to the chair at appropriate intervals.

h) For longer meetings (more than 1hr), consider whether a comfort break at some point would be beneficial, or welcome attendees to turn off their camera as appropriate to allow themselves comfort to move etc.

i) At the end of the meeting, advise attendees whether or not a transcript and/or presentation slides will be made available, if not provided in advance of the meeting.

2 - Inclusivity

Inclusivity is a core value in the University strategy. Online meetings present challenges and opportunities for creating an inclusive environment.

a) It can be difficult when chairing, if videos of attendees are turned off – it makes it hard to 'read the room' or take visual cues when discussing topics. However, it is important to recognise the potential unconscious bias that can arise when home settings are shared and/or the potential privacy considerations for individuals when working from home. Conveners are likely to want attendees to keep their cameras on in order to engage as effectively as possible and may wish to state this preference clearly. In doing so, they should be mindful that some attendees may not wish to use their video due to their home environment, accessibility concerns or for some personal reasons and so are encouraged to make the request with that in mind.

b) Similarly, be aware that some attendees may not wish to use their microphone due to accessibility concerns or may have an impairment. Invite people to use the chat function if they express that they are not comfortable with using the microphone.

c) If your technology allows, ensure the meeting settings on Zoom permit individuals to amend their details during the meeting so that their names are shown on screen. Do check that your name is visible, so others know how to address you. It is particularly appreciated if you indicate your preferred pronouns and use the preferred pronouns others at the meeting indicate on their profiles.

To add your pronouns to your own Zoom account, sign into your university Zoom account, add your pronouns to the end of your surname, and save the change. This can make attendees feel more comfortable and included in meeting spaces. [This]

guide shows how preferred pronouns can managed for your zoom, with the option to choose when they are displayed.

d) If using a webcam, consider what is behind you and whether or not you want other people on the meeting to see it. Teams and Zoom both offer virtual backgrounds which you can use for privacy. You can also download University of Glasgow branded virtual backgrounds – there are also plain high-contrast background versions which may be more suitable for people with certain disabilities.

e) However, if using a background, be aware that this may interfere with visual assistance technology for visually impaired attendees and can make lip reading and viewing body language more difficult for those with a hearing impairment.

f) Provide slides/presentations in advance of meetings whenever possible. This helps those with a hearing impairment prepare and better follow meetings.

g) If screen sharing, be aware of any member who may have a hearing impairment and will find the reduction of the speaker to a small screen difficult. Screen sharing and breakout rooms can disable any automatic captions.

h) Zoom has in-system live transcriptions, which can be automatically generated for all university Zoom accounts. [Further information can be found on the Digital Accessibility Guidance on the Glasgow Anywhere web pages.] However, as these live transcriptions are not always fully accurate, it is good to check in advance of the meeting if anyone attending has particular accessibility-related issues with Zoom prior to the meeting. This could involve engaging a live captioner for the call if someone has a specific need who should be booked in advance of the meeting.
If an external stenographer is attending a Zoom meeting, ensure that the '*Only authenticated users can join*' setting is **disabled**. Some attendees may not tell you that they use an external stenographer in meetings and if so, the stenographer does not have a university access, they cannot access Zoom meetings. It may therefore be worth checking this at the beginning of the meeting.

3 - Further Guidance

Read general information on supporting your disabled colleagues and specific guidance for supporting hearing-impaired colleagues. For more detailed information, please refer to the University's Digital Accessibility Guidance.