Resources @ EJP

Best Practices for Accessible Zoom Meetings

Before the Meeting

Add an Accommodations Statement

Please be sure to include an accommodations statement in your event announcement or reminders. An example statement is included below:

If you need any accommodations to fully participate in this even or meeting, please email x at xxx@illinois.edu.

Enable "Always Show Meeting Controls"

Enabling "Always Show Meeting Controls" ensures the meeting control bar will not disappear or go away on your computer screen. As the host, you can enable this feature under meeting options when scheduling a session. To enable, follow the instructions below.

1. Launch Zoom and select the "Home" icon.
2. Select the Settings "Gear" icon. A settings pop-up window will open.
3. Select the "View Advanced Features" (Windows) or "View More Settings" link (Mac) under General settings. The Zoom website will open. Login if you are prompted with the login screen. The Meeting Settings page will open.
4. Navigate to the In Meeting (Basics) section of the Meeting Settings page.
5. Enable the "Always show meeting control toolbar" setting.

Enable "Mute Participants Upon Entry" Feature

When choosing this function, please alert participants at the start of the meeting. Share that the purpose of muting is to limit competing background noise and distractions for participants. As the host, you can enable this feature under meeting options when scheduling a session.

Enable the "Closed Captions" Feature

To enable Closed Captions for your meetings, view the [Starting Manual Closed Captioning or Live Transcription in a Meeting](#) section of Zoom's Help page.

You can also enable Automatic Captions using Artificial Intelligence: At the start of the meeting, click the "Live Transcript" Button and then "Enable Auto-Transcription".

Note: Automatic captions do not meet ADA standards but are still an important accessibility tool.

Spotlight ASL Interpreters

If you have an ASL interpreter in a zoom meeting, make sure the host "Spotlights" the interpreter to make sure they are well seen by those who need this resource.

If you are putting people into breakout rooms, make sure you manually put the interpreter in the same breakout room as those using the interpreter. To manually create breakout rooms, you can do so before the meeting starts in your meeting settings. Instructions can be found on Zoom's [Pre-Assigning Participants to Breakout Rooms guide](#).

This applies to in-person meetings as well! If you have an ASL interpreter, make sure they are in a central location and are visible to everyone in the room.

Make Sure Attendees are Aware of Keyboard Shortcuts

Shortcuts are important for those using keyboard-only navigation or assistive technology. Check out Zoom's [Hot Keys and Keyboard Shortcuts guide](#) for more information.

During the Meeting

Inform Participants of the Setting You've Enabled

At the start of the meeting, tell participants about features you've enabled and provide guidance on how members can contribute to an inclusive meeting space.

Record Your Zoom Sessions

Using this tool allows participants to re-watch at their own pace and allows for folks to participate if they were unable to attend the live meeting.

If you plan to record the meeting, explain how recordings will be used, which parts will be recorded, and how they will be shared or stored. Remember to ask for permission before recording participants.

To record Zoom sessions as a host, click the "record button" in your control settings, and then choose to "record to this device" or "record to cloud." For more on "record to this device" visit Zoom's [Starting a Local Recording Guide](#). Recordings made directly to the Zoom cloud by University of Illinois account holders will be automatically transferred to the Host's "My Media" repository in Illinois Media Space (Kaltura) ([Technology Services at Illinois](#)). Additionally, recordings can also be saved to your cloud-sharing service of choice.

Decrease Your Speed in Online Conversations

Pacing yourself while speaking and stopping periodically to ensure no one needs anything repeated is helpful for online users who might cut-out, lose connection, and break-up in online meetings. Speaking at a slightly slower pace can also help transcribers and people who speak English as an additional language.

This applies to in-person meetings as well! Make sure you pace yourself and check-in with attendees to see what they need to be repeated or what questions they may have missed.

Describe Visual Content that is Displayed while Screen-Sharing

This applies to in-person meetings, too! While presenting at an in-person meeting, make sure you are describing what you are presenting or showing to the group. Here are some tips for how to describe visual content…

» Replace words like "here" or "there" with directions like "in the top left of the screen."

- » Replace pronouns like "it," "this," or "that" with nouns like "the red Record button."
- » Describe images or read text passages included on the screen, if users haven't been provided alternative text versions like accessible PPT slides or Word documents.
- » Ask members to say their names before speaking (e.g., This is Sara. When is the next meeting?")

These tips can help anyone with visual or cognitive impairments, as well as someone that may have phoned in rather than with a screen device.

Read Chat Questions Aloud

Re-voice questions that are asked to you to ensure everyone is part of the conversation. This applies to in-person meetings, too! Especially in large conference rooms, if someone asks a question, some participants may not hear it.

Be Aware of Sound Quality

If you are not speaking, mute yourself! If you are speaking, speak as clearly as you can into the microphone so you can reduce background noise.

Face the Camera

Many participants, including those who have hearing impairments or who speak English as an additional language, benefit from seeing speakers' facial expressions and movements. Encourage participants to share their video if possible. Perhaps, remind participants using a second screen or external cameras to reposition their device so they can face the camera.

Allow Video Cameras to be Off

Some attendees may not want to turn on their video in a meeting for a variety of reasons such as medical privacy concerns, concerns about the ways in which the use of video may reveal or highlight disabilities, the anxiety or distraction that video can cause, and more. It's okay to encourage "cameras on", but respect participant wishes if they don't use their camera.

After the Meeting

Share any materials, links, notes, or captioned recordings from the session. Additionally, share any attachments or links you provided in the chat. Those using assistive technology may not be able to click on or activate chat links.

Explore More Resources on Accessible Video Conferencing!

- » [Zoom's Accessibility Features page](#)
- » [Usability & Web Accessibility (Yale University)](#)
- » [Accessible Technology (University of Colorado-Bolder)](#)
- » [Accessible Virtual Meetings (Deque)](#)
- » [Tips for More Inclusive Zoom Meetings (Explore Access)](#)

For more resources related accessibility in general, visit the [Links of Interest](#) page on the Disability Resources & Educational Services (DRES), a division of the College of Applied Health Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.