



# Interactive videoconferencing

Help sheet

## 4: Planning your educational session

In preparation for videoconferencing, more so than with face to face teaching, an efficient, well organised approach and a high level of prior planning are fundamental to success. This help sheet is designed to give you an overview of the issues you may need to consider in order that you and your students gain the optimum experience when working in the videoconferencing environment.

### Scope of planning

Planning should cover a number of areas.

#### Administration Issues

- Book room with local site administrator if point-to-point or with the Central site for multi-point conferencing.
- Forward learning resources by the chosen distribution method in plenty of time for your videoconference
- Identify your 'team' – decide who will be responsible for setting up and maintaining the remote site before and during the session. Check with them before your videoconference to ensure preparations are in-hand

#### Learning and Teaching by Videoconference

Plan your learning and teaching *for* the IVC environment rather than trying to adapt it to suit your teaching approach. Your plan should include:

- Clear learning objectives for your session
- Agreed protocols and etiquette for group interaction and communication
- Time for a brief videoconferencing technology review for first-time users
- A Lesson Planning Matrix (see other help sheet) for your interaction with students
- Development of a 'Plan B' as a back-up in case the videoconference technology falters e.g. audio signal loss can be compensated by access to a teleconference or speaker phone
- A visit to the remote site/s early in the semester (if possible)

#### The Technology

Familiarise yourself with the videoconferencing room layout and equipment. Even though all videoconferencing setups use similar tools, there may be differences between individual rooms. If using unfamiliar equipment/venue, try to conduct a 'dry-run' with a colleague ahead of your actual session.

## Teaching strategies for videoconferencing

The types of sessions widely reported to work best in a videoconferencing environment are:

- guest presentations (for interaction rather than delivery)
- interviews
- panel discussions
- group discussion
- mini-lectures
- student presentations
- brain storming
- modeling
- role plays or simulations
- demonstrations
- small group activities.

(Andrews, 2002)

Videoconferencing requires more time than a face to face session as there are time delays because of data transmission and etiquette factors. **Only about 2/3 of the material normally covered in a face to face environment is feasible in a videoconference.**

The longer the planned video-conference, the greater the need for variety in teaching and learning activities. **After 15 - 25 minutes of one person talking, a change to an interactive learning and teaching strategy is recommended.**

For further assistance with planning your educational session, see the help sheet 'Planning Matrix'.

### Notes adapted from

Andrews, Trish 2002. Using videoconferencing for teaching and learning. Teaching and learning in higher education series. The University of Queensland