



Interactive videoconferencing

Help sheet

5: Videoconferencing etiquette

To assist with the best possible videoconference experience, the following etiquette guidelines are recommended. You may have some site-specific ones of your own to add!

Beginning the session

- Arrange to call all sites at least 5 minutes prior to the start of the session. This helps to ensure everyone is connected before the actual starting time.
- Let other sites know that you are 'there' when you are connected.
- Encourage participants to be present 5 -10 minutes ahead of the scheduled start as late arrival is more distracting than in a traditional classroom.
- Start your session on time.
- Have participants introduce themselves at the outset, either individually, or site by site if there are many people present
- Publicise at the beginning of the session when breaks will occur. This reminds participants of the times they are able to leave the room.

During the session

- Discuss the expected protocols and etiquette with participants as soon as you can so that everyone is clear on what is expected. Include how you would like to deal with questions to minimize disruption to the flow of the videoconference.
- Identify whether there are any first-time participants and be prepared to give a basic talk about using the videoconferencing equipment.
- Ask if participants have received distributed materials (if applicable).
- Speak clearly at a normal volume and wait until others have finished speaking before responding to avoid break-up of the audio signal.
- Interactive learning activities may require participants to have specific roles i.e. chair person in a debate or spokesperson for a team. Decide in advance who will take on these roles and explain their scope.
- Notice where the camera is and avoid standing in front of it when you are addressing your home site. You will block the view for remote sites!
- If refreshments are available during intervals to participants at the home site, try to ensure equity by arranging same for remote sites.

Personal etiquette recommendations

- Request that far end participants mute their microphones when not contributing.
- Avoid covering the microphones with books, papers, clothing etc.
- Aim for seating arrangements which allow all participants to appear on camera.
- Try to maintain eye contact with participants at all sites rather than just the home site. Look into the lens rather than focusing on the monitor whilst you are speaking.
- Avoid wearing patterned and very brightly coloured clothing which places extra demands on the video signal-compression system.
- 'Noisy' jewellery items, such as bangles, can disrupt the audio signal.
- Rapid movements on camera will result in image distortion. You can test the limits of your system ahead of the videoconference using 'self-view' facility on the remote control unit.
- Remind students that their actions will be visible constantly – which could be distracting to others (eating, yawning, searching bags etc).

Ending the session

- Allow some time for final questions or discussion.
- Establish follow-up activities or preparations required for next session.
- Clarify availability of additional resources where applicable.
- Thank participants for their contributions.

Notes adapted from

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