



Interactive videoconferencing

Learning and teaching strategies

Meetings in the videoconferencing environment

Videoconferencing is widely used for departmental, inter-departmental and inter-organisational staff meetings. Apart from the obvious reduction in travel time and costs, the real time communication offered by videoconferencing enhances the sharing of information. Videoconferencing meetings could occur within a room, 'roll about' or 'desk top' systems depending on the number of participants.

Preparing for a meeting

- Prepare and circulate a draft agenda earlier than you would for a face to face meeting. This allows time to receive feedback and circulate final versions and other pre-reading well ahead of the conference. Remember that the videoconference format (with its time delays because of data transmission and etiquette factors) means that only about 2/3 of face to face meetings items can generally be covered.
- Check that the camera view and microphone placement captures all participants.
- The document camera and/or laptop should be in proximity of the person most likely to operate them. Establish who this will be and arrange the seating accordingly.
- Videoconferencing and teleconferencing can be combined to suit participants.

Booking a meeting

Contact your videoconferencing site co-ordinator to find out how to book a videoconference.

Videoconference meeting etiquette

- Be punctual. A late arrival is more distracting than in a conventional meeting.
- Mute the microphone when not actually talking.
- If you are the instigator, ensure booking processes are followed.
- Decide who will chair and who will take minutes and state this. It is sometimes difficult for other participants to know that anyone is taking the minutes as only the person talking may be visible.
- Wait for a speaker to finish. Interrupting will break the audio signal and disrupt the flow of the meeting.
- Site signage should be visible at multi-point conferences to clarify the site that the current speaker is representing.
- Wear neutral clothing colours.
- Avoid rapid movements which can be distracting and appear distorted on screen.
- Avoid covering the microphone or rustling documents whilst it is switched on.

Concluding the meeting

- Prior to concluding the meeting it is handy to schedule a date for your next videoconference as it is often difficult to accommodate all participants as well as availability of videoconferencing facilities at the last minute. (This point applies particularly when using a dedicated VC room.)
- When leaving a meeting, particularly if the meeting is still in progress, remember to disconnect your line by operating the relevant key on the remote control. Subsequent users of the room may otherwise inadvertently find themselves involved!