

Digital conference/meeting – dos and don'ts

In this document, we have gathered useful information on organizing a digital conference or larger meeting in Zoom.

- **Type of meeting decide the format – meeting or webinar:** What is the purpose of the meeting and what kind of format is best suited for your event?
 - Meeting: all participants can take part in discussions
 - Webinar: the participants can only pose questions in the chat (or other platform, eg. Padlet, Mentimeter)
- **One dedicated moderator for each session:** Be sure to have a dedicated moderator for all activities throughout the program (remember the breaks, poster session, alternative activities, etc.)
- **Pre-meeting with moderators and speakers:** Have a joint pre-meeting with moderators, speakers and poster presenters some days in advance to check and try e.g.:
 - Green screen function (send them a preferred back ground of your choice in advance, try it out)
 - Share screen, practice some slides of the presentation
 - Chat function (also decide on how and when to use it! If you are using Zoom, you may send messages privately or to all participants)
 - Go through the detailed schedule with times for all activities
 - Check lighting, microphones and ask them to speak slow and clearly
 - Use breakout rooms for discussions in different sessions
 - Discuss the technical/chat-support that will be available during the meeting, and agree on how to collaborate around certain issues (e.g. collating and ordering questions from chat)

Note, during the event you may invite speakers to a breakout room to check technical issues, for example the microphone, sharing the presentation, etc.

- **Program:** Send out a clear program with links to the digital rooms. Consider making an Outlook event that people can save to their calendars. A program (without links) can be posted on a webpage.
- **FAQ:** Send out a FAQ before the conference regarding practicalities and technicalities in the online platform, as well as whom to contact with questions regarding the program. The FAQ can be posted on a webpage.

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- **Mailings:**
 - **Welcome message:** Send out a Welcome message one or two days before the conference (to minimize hijacking), with program, links, FAQ and additional information.
 - **Reminder:** Send out a reminder before the conference starts the same day (program + link).
 - **Thank you:** Send a Thank you message afterwards with information on e.g. when/where reports will be published.
- **Try out/Help desk:** Allow all participants (presenters and audience) to join the meeting 30 min – 1 h before start to get help with technical issues and try out the features in the platform. Preferably, share a “Welcome” screen.
- **Encourage participants to join/login 10 min before start:** This is to avoid disturbances and interruption. If you have time, it’s pleasant to say hello individually, and it also ensures that they are ‘real’ people logged in. Help those that need it to change the name that is showing to their name – sometimes it is preset as a login name (e.g. xcr02aeg). Consider having a poll activated with questions like:
 - Have you muted your microphone?
 - Have you turned on your video?
 - Have you found the chat function?
- **Breaks, coffee breaks and leg stretchers:** Plan for many breaks (both short and longer), as a digital conference is exhausting. Five minutes breaks every hour, with some additional longer breaks where participants can enjoy coffee and a chat, eat lunch (at least 30 min), a yoga session, some music etc. To use a countdown timer (e.g. an online timer like timeanddate.com) and music for the breaks without activity is appreciated. You may also use breakout rooms for coffee breaks.
- **Presentations/lecturers:** about 30 minutes is suitable. For longer presentations, use a poll or similar to have a “break”.
- **Breakout rooms:** Use breakout rooms to divide participants into smaller groups. You may make the groups beforehand (if you know who is participating), or you can do random groups. If you are using Zoom, ONLY the host (not the co-hosts) that can invite participants into breakout rooms. Co-hosts will also be invited to join the breakout rooms, while the host can visit all rooms.
 - **Discussion groups:** send an email to the group with a form which states who is the moderator/chairman and secretary (if you know the participants beforehand)

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- **Polls:** can be used to pose questions regarding e.g. a presentation. You prepare the polls beforehand.
- **Make room for discussion:** More people tend to ask questions and fill up with questions and comments in the chat compared to when they meet IRL. Allow plenty of time to address questions and comments in discussion sessions.
- **Security:**
 - Only send out the links to the conference to registered participants.
 - Do not allow sharing files in the chat (settings in your website profile: **File transfer** should be turned off)
 - **Allowed removed participants to rejoin** should be turned off (setting in your website profile)
 - Only host/co-host should be able to share screen (settings in the meeting platform after you started the meeting)
 - Optional to not save the chat (Note, if you choose not to save the chat, you cannot cut-and-paste from the chat either)
 - Optional to turn off everyone's video when they enter the meeting (setting in your website profile: **Participants video** should be turned off)
 - Optional to turn off everyone's microphone when they enter the meeting (setting in your website profile: **Mute participants upon entry** should be turned on)
 - You may broadcast your webinar via live streaming (Facebook, Workplace by Facebook, YouTube, Custom Live Streaming Service). **Allow live streaming meetings** should be turned on (setting in your website profile). Note, from September 2020 audio information in pre-recorded video and audio clips shall be reproduced with subtitle. Live broadcasts that can also be accessed afterwards on the web should be subtitled within 14 days.
- **Handle questions from participants:**

Questions from participants can be handled in different ways depending on the format. To pose questions in the chat function can facilitate discussions among participants, but it is harder to keep track.

 - Use the **Show hand** feature. The moderator invite participants to ask questions when they **Show hand**. Host and co-host can 'lower hand' at any time.
 - Participants pose questions in the chat
 - Participants pose questions in an optional notice-board/platform, eg. Padlet, Mentimeter.

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- **GDPR:**
 - If you plan to record (audio, video, presentation) the meeting, you need to inform regarding the recording and you need a written consent from all participants in advance (including the speakers). You may ask for permission on recording upon registration to the meeting.
 - Remember to consider the processing of personal data according to Lund University's guidelines.

[Processing of data at lunduniversity.lu.se](https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se)

Organization behind the scene: it is good to have additional communication platforms (e.g. using Teams and Zoom in parallel) to be able to reach your organizing colleagues without interrupting the conference.

- **Depending on the size of the meeting you need a technical team and a question/chat team:**
 - **Technical team** – responsibilities
 - Mute microphones
 - Answer questions on technical issues and help
 - Have a plan B for the speakers (e.g. have a copy of the presentation and a phone number (test beforehand and have it close by)
 - Encourage participants to rename strange names e.g. aa1234bb.
 - Ask everyone to try their microphones and video when they login (during Try-out) – also to know there is a real person behind the screen
 - Responsible for recording, can be manual or automatic (this has to be communicated and approved beforehand by all participants and speakers, GDPR)
 - Use an additional communication channel (e.g. using Teams and Zoom in parallel) to be able to reach your organizing colleagues without interrupting the conference.
 - Timekeeper that helps the moderator to keep track of the time (choose one person to be timekeeper)
 - Share Countdown timer during breaks
 - Keep track of your email

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- **Questions/chat team** – responsibilities
 - Supports the moderator to keep track of the questions in the chat
 - Order the questions in groups (if needed)
 - Use a parallel online document for the questions (e.g. google docs) that you share with the moderators. Note that you need to discuss how you organize this with the moderator beforehand
 - Timekeeper that helps the moderator to keep track of the time (choose one person to be timekeeper)

Interactive tools

There are many different online tools that can be used to make your meeting interactive.

Mentimeter

A voting tool to create additional interactivity in meetings.

[About Mentimeter \(in Swedish\) at education.lu.se](https://education.lu.se)

[Create an account by logging in with your LUCAT ID at mentimeter.com](https://www.mentimeter.com)

Padlet

A collaboration tool to create interaction using dashboards.

[More information and registration at padlet.com](https://www.padlet.com)

Mural

A digital workspace for visual collaboration.

[More information and registration at mural.co](https://www.mural.co)

