

# Guidance on Inclusive Hybrid Meetings

If you need this guidance in an alternative format please email the central EDI Team: [edi-team@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:edi-team@bristol.ac.uk)

**Hybrid meetings are where there is a combination of people within the same room (in-person) and others who are joining remotely (such as via Microsoft Teams). As part of our commitment to building an inclusive working environment it is vital that we take steps to ensure that hybrid meetings are designed to enable the participation and engagement of all colleagues. Here are some practical tips on conducting effective hybrid meetings where all participants can have a positive experience and opportunity to contribute.**

## Adopt a 'remote-first' mindset

A remote-first mindset means you assume that all participants will be remote, even if some people work from the office. This could mean having everyone join the meeting from their laptops – even those in the meeting room - ensuring that only one laptop in the meeting room has sound on. This allows those attending online to feel more included in the meeting.

## Question if the meeting is really necessary

Be clear about the meeting's purpose (such as decision-making, information-sharing, and collaboration) and check that it's suited to a hybrid approach. Managers should also be mindful of their relative 'power' over convening short-notice in-person meetings and question whether such meetings are necessary or can be held online within the context of accessibility and participant requirements. Where it is, communicate the intended outcome and expectations so everyone can prepare.

## Accessibility

Make **reasonable adjustments** to ensure that people who are neurodiverse or disabled can participate in the meeting.

Ask participants if they have access or workplace adjustment requirements before the meeting date and ensure that the meeting room is accessible to all participants and suitable for a hybrid meeting.

### Examples of adjustments include:

- Recording the meeting.
- Scheduling breaks in the meeting.

- Providing materials such as slides in advance of the meeting date (this should be done as good practice so that all participants can prepare).
- Ensuring your resources are [dyslexia friendly](#).

Note that Microsoft Teams has built-in [closed captioning](#) that can be turned on from the meeting controls; Zoom has built-in [closed captioning](#) that can be turned on within meeting settings. It is also possible to produce a transcript of a meeting.

Further information on meeting different accessibility requirements is available on the University's [Digital Education Office website](#).

## Responsibilities

### As a meeting participant, you should:

- Test your microphone and speakers.
- The use of cameras in hybrid meetings can be based on someone's preference, but as a general rule, having cameras on when speaking or contributing to a meeting can help with engagement and body language. If online participants are not speaking and feel more comfortable with cameras off, that is perfectly okay.
- Where possible, use a headset. A headset with a built-in microphone will make recognising what you're saying easier and create captions automatically. It's also a great way to filter background noise and unwanted distractions.
- Use the mute button when not speaking. This reduces unwanted background noise and distractions.
- Be sure to make yourself aware of any set rules or principles and involve those dialling online.

### As Chair of the meeting, and in addition to the points above, you should:

- Assign a colleague to monitor the online 'raise hand' or 'chat' functions to see if the people dialling in remotely are trying to contribute. Apply the 'raising hand' principle to all participants, including those in person. It is good practice to communicate who you would like to speak and who you will be asking to speak next (this allows time for preparation).
- Ensure one person speaks at a time.
- Avoid creating a disparity for those online or in-person and work to ensure each attendee has a consistent experience and ability to contribute to the meeting. Be mindful of virtual participants and invite them to contribute throughout or ask for their comments/feedback first - don't just bring them in at the end.

- Describe what happens in the room if remote participants can't see it. Even things that are irrelevant to the main business of the meeting (like a colleague trying to connect cables to the projector) should be explained so that remote participants don't feel left out and avoid any unnecessary confusion.
- Steer those in the meeting room away from beginning side conversations that remote participants cannot hear or take part in.
- Remind participants to use captioning tools if they are required.
- Follow up with a written summary of key points discussed and decisions made, such as minutes, actions, and any documentation used within the meeting.

## Inclusive Hybrid Meeting Checklist



### Before the meeting

Ask participants to inform you of any workplace adjustments that might be required and ensure these are implemented.

Ensure the meeting has a clear purpose and outcomes, with this being explained to participants.

Circulate any slides/documents in advance with clear instructions of expectations for these slides/documents and their requirements within the meeting.

Ensure everyone is familiar with any software used in the meetings, such as Teams or Zoom, unless other software is essential.

Ensure someone is familiar with using the technology and equipment available in the meeting room to avoid any delays at the start of the meeting.

Ensure participants are aware of when a meeting is being recorded and the intended purposes of this recording, i.e. note-taking.

### During the meeting

At the start of the meeting, clearly define meeting etiquette and rules, such as how the meeting will run, turning off mics when not speaking, and indicating when people would like to contribute. Remember to extend the 'raising hand function' to everybody—virtual or physical hands.

Be mindful of virtual participants and ensure they are invited to provide comments and feedback.

### After the meeting

Circulate concise minutes/notes and a clear action plan as quickly as possible after the meeting and ensure they are followed up. Use the chat channel generated by the meeting to share any notes or additional information. This is particularly good if it is a recurring meeting, as it keeps all associated information in one place.



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team

[bristol.ac.uk/inclusion](http://bristol.ac.uk/inclusion)

