

Checklist for virtual team meetings

Before the meeting

- Have the line or virtual room open early so participants can check everything is working okay, including camera functionality, audio and screen sharing.
- Send out an agenda in advance but think more carefully about the items than you would do for face-to-face meetings as virtual meeting mode means there can be more strain.
- Things to set out in advance for meeting attendees:
 - Key talking points
 - Order of priority for items (this can be useful if technology cuts out!)
 - Meeting structure (for example, when and for how long you plan to discuss each talking point)
 - Team members/teams that will be in attendance
 - What each team member/team is responsible for bringing to the meeting
 - Any relevant documents, files, or research
- Outline ground rules/principles:
 - Can everyone speak freely or will the team leader call on someone when it's that person's turn to contribute?
 - Does everyone need to have their camera on at all times or just the presenter?
 - Should people mute their phones while others are speaking?
 - How to raise a point without interrupting someone else.
 - Avoid multi-tasking, such as checking emails or social media while someone else is talking
 - Make sure phones are on silent or vibrate.

During the meeting

- Have a check-in before the formal meeting starts. Give each person one minute and ask them how they're doing.
- Give each person time on the agenda. In advance of the session, have team members write up an issue they've been struggling with and bring it to the table, one at a time.
- Try to direct questions and comments to specific individuals.
- Have people use the chat option to notify you if they want to speak or to indicate, for example, if you missed something.
- Make use of the platforms functionality. For example, WebEx and Zoom have the ability to conduct quizzes and tallies, and Zoom enables break-out rooms.
- Don't use the mute button unless you really need to. When people go on mute they are more likely to be doing other things, such as responding to email.



After the meeting

- Ask attendees for suggestions on how to improve the meeting, particularly if it's going to be a regular one. What should you stop, start and continue?
- Think about building a “virtual watercooler” – a communal place online where team members can meet and connect outside of official team meetings. They can go to this after the formal meeting has ended – just as people would have a chat as they leave a meeting in a physical room. This could be via WhatsApp, for example.