

Video Conferencing Etiquette

Corona is throwing us a curve ball. As a consequence, and for the time being, we have to teach and study from home in an environment unfamiliar to most of us.

All rules of regular conference calls and meetings stand and are perhaps even more important here: stick to the agenda, take turns talking, don't feel the need to speak unless you actually have something to say. Don't think you can get away with it by turning off your camera: if everyone else is using video, etiquette dictates that you must too; demanding special treatment is bad form.

1.



Make sure your hardware works correctly.

Test microphone, speakers, headphones and your internet speeds to support a decent level of quality for a video call. Do a few test runs with colleagues.

2.



Fully engage participants.

You want your remote video conference attendees to feel like they can participate and are truly a part of the meeting.

3.



Frame the camera correctly.

Make sure you frame your camera in a way that feels natural and allows you to look at the camera. Sit at eye level to the lens and try to position yourself so that it shows midsection up.

4.



Blur/change your background.

Maybe you don't have an office at home. Or maybe you found a quiet place in which you could attend your meeting but the room itself might be distractingly messy or have walls with not-so-bland decor. If you don't have the time (or the inclination) to alter the room itself, you can still hide the appearance of your chosen space via background features offered in some video conferencing clients. Please use the provided backgrounds for each Campus.

5.



Have the right light.

Poor lighting conditions have an enormous effect on the video quality that you send. Do not mix natural lighting + office lighting unless your office bulbs are daylight white. You also don't want any faces being lit from below, as this makes you look like a cartoonish villain from a silent film. Lighting from the sides will make faces look the best.

6.



Sound

An external microphone or headset has a better sound quality than the microphone of your laptop. It also appears more professional.

7.



Be on time.

This one should be standard with any meeting, video or otherwise. However, when you're dialling in to a video conference, it's especially important.

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8.



Sign-Up with your full name.

In order to ensure professionalism sign up with your first and last name.

9.



Look into the camera.

Eye contact is extremely important during a video conference, as you want the person or team that's conferencing in to feel engaged.

10.



Mute your mic.

Remember to turn off your microphone, unless you are speaking to the class. This is not only respectful, it also prevents annoying background noises that might disrupt the session.

11.



Pay Attention.

Stop checking emails, smartphone messages or working on other documents during video conferences. This comes across as rude to your participants.

12.



Make an agenda.

If you are the host of the meeting, prepare an agenda and present it at the beginning.

13.



Establish a handoff procedure.

A big issue with any video or audio conference is double-talk, where attendees speak over each other and nobody is heard. Allow everyone to finish speaking before you speak or establish a "handoff" procedure that gives every participant a chance to respond.

14.



Finish on time.

And make sure you have actually hung up before you let out that relieved sigh.