

Accessibility Best Practices for Using Zoom for Meetings and Classes

Create a Personal Meeting Link

A [Custom Personal Link](#) provides a clean and consistent Zoom meeting URL for all your meetings and classes. For example, you can create a personal link that is your first initial and last name. This is great for both meeting hosts and professors as it's easy for employees and students to remember.

Turn off HD Video

Turning off HD Video will improve the user experience for everyone attending, especially if they have bandwidth limitations, restricted data usage on mobile, or unreliable internet access. Some institutions may already have this feature disabled for all licenses depending on how your institution's Zoom global settings are configured.

From within the Zoom Client:

1. Select the "Home" tab.
2. Select the Settings "Gear" icon. A settings pop-up window will open.
3. Select the View More Settings link under General settings. The Zoom website will open. Login if you are prompted with the login screen. The Meeting Settings page will open.
4. Navigate to the In Meeting (Advanced) section of the Meeting Settings page.
5. Disable the Group HD video setting.

Note: If the Group HD video setting is "locked by admin," contact your Help Desk to have the feature unlocked.

Enable the Closed Captions Feature

[Enable the Closed Captions feature](#) on your account for any meetings or classes that will require closed captions. Closed captioning services will be identified based on accommodation requests. In addition, please be familiar with how to [assign a participant to type closed captions](#) should a request arise.

Enable "Always Show Meeting Controls"

By selecting the "Always Show Meeting Controls" checkbox, the controls at the bottom of the zoom screen will remain up. This improves the user experience for many participants as they don't have to worry about the bar appearing and disappearing upon hover (especially if they are new to Zoom and don't know how to make the bar at the bottom show up after it's disappeared).

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2. Select the Settings "Gear" icon. A settings pop-up window will open.
3. Select the View More Settings link under General settings. The Zoom website will open. Login if you are prompted with the login screen. The Meeting Settings page will open.
4. Navigate to the In Meeting (Basics) section of the Meeting Settings page.
5. Enable the "Always Show Meeting Controls" setting.

Enable the “Mute Participants Upon Entry” Feature

In your meeting settings, select the “Mute participants upon entry” checkbox (located under Meeting Options when scheduling a session). Participants will have to unmute their mics to participate. This feature will ensure less disruptions at the start of a meeting or class.

Communicate Keyboard Shortcuts

Send out the [Zoom Keyboard Shortcuts](#) ahead of time. These instructions are valuable for anyone using keyboard only navigation or assistive technology. In addition, it could be helpful to anyone who may have had their mouse stop working unexpectedly.

Remember to describe images and other visual content that’s displayed

Describing visual content that is displayed will help anyone with a vision or cognitive disability, as well as someone that may have needed to call in due to a local internet outage.

Provide instructions on how participants can ask questions

There are a couple ways people can ask questions. First, participants can [use non-verbal feedback](#), such as raising their hand and unmuting when called upon. In addition, they can post a question in the chat feature. The recommendation is to use both features, but to always repeat questions that are provided through chat. By repeating the questions, you will help anyone that can’t access the chat during the session (people using assistive technology will have too much screen reader interference if they enable chat) and you will improve the captioning quality of any recorded sessions.

Send any resource links you post in Chat via email as well

It’s okay to use the Chat feature. However, keep in mind that anyone using assistive technology may not be able to copy or activate the links. It’s recommended that you send any resource links you’ll be sharing either prior to or after the session. You can also speak out the URL when posting it in Chat. If your resource link is long, consider using a URL shortener, such as bit.ly or Tiny URL, to help with communicating the link verbally and so that the link is cleaner for anyone copying it from the chat box.

Confirm the best polling technology in advance

Please reach out to your IT office to identify which polling product is the most accessible to all your participants. Currently, the Zoom polling tool has significant barriers for both presenters and participants with disabilities.

Describe what you are annotating if using the Whiteboard feature

Similar to using a white board in the classroom, you should always describe what you are writing on the board for anyone with a disability or anyone that is using their phone due to internet connection issues in your virtual room.

Recording Your Zoom Session

There are a few reasons to consider [recording your zoom sessions locally](#) to your computer for distribution after a meeting or class:

1. Occasionally, due to local outages, students or employees may not be able to access a live Zoom session.

2. Currently, there are several [countries or regions where international students are unable to access live Zoom sessions](#) for regulatory reasons.
3. In addition, other unexpected distractions may come up that cause your meeting or class participant to miss portions of your class.

Note: If you record your sessions to the Zoom cloud, you may experience a significant delay in accessing them at this time (as of March 20, 2020). Currently, the best approach is to record them to your local device.