

MEETINGS IN A HYBRID WORKPLACE

Running great team meetings has always required skill. Our current hybrid work environment adds layers of complexity for scheduling, meeting spaces and engagement. There is no one magic solution for conducting meetings in a hybrid workplace, but some planning, technology and good team agreements can create effective and enjoyable meeting experiences. Below are some things for you to consider when convening team meetings in a hybrid workplace.

IN-PERSON:

Definition: In-person meetings are when all participants are present in the same location.

Considerations: In-person meetings create opportunities for connection and relationship building, but they can be a challenge to schedule in a hybrid work environment.

Tips and Resources:

- One option is to schedule a day when all team members are in the office, but this is not always practical or possible depending on space and time constraints.
- Schedule in-person meetings less frequently, and with lots of notice, so people can make arrangements to be on campus. Communicate your expectation for attendance.
- Structure the meeting around relational connections, meaningful dialogue, or activities requiring physical presence that make it special rather than something that could be done online. Where possible, provide some refreshments.
- Take [Make Meetings Matter](#) or [Facilitate Collaboration](#) courses to improve meeting skills.

ONLINE/VIRTUAL:

Definition: Online or virtual meetings occur when all participants use technology to individually attend online from their campus workspace, a meeting room, or a remote location.

Considerations: Technology such as MS Teams, Zoom and various online collaboration tools have made it easier to conduct engaging online meetings that allow everyone to have a voice, collaborate on shared documents, and engage in smaller breakout discussions. Online meetings require planning, good design/structure, technical skills, and team agreements to be effective.

Tips:

- Ensure all participants learn the technology and features built into the preferred meeting platform (eg. Zoom and MS Teams) to make online meetings engaging. Use the [Zoom Learning Centre](#), MS Teams Training (click Help at bottom left of your Teams page) or search [Learning Central](#) for online collaboration courses.
- Assign someone to help manage the chat, share slides/videos or create breakout rooms.
- Ensure employees have good internet bandwidth, a good camera, headset with boom mic, and know how to use noise suppression features within the meeting platform.
- Consider what bookable private space(s) may be available to those who work in open offices.

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- Collaboratively create online team meeting norms using the resource on page 3.
- Resource: [Tips for engaging online meetings at UVic](#).

HYBRID MEETINGS

Definition: A hybrid meeting is designed to accommodate a mix of online and in-person participants.

Considerations: Hybrid meetings require special consideration, careful meeting design and structure, technical support, and expensive technology to be the most effective. Some teams avoid hybrid meetings by agreeing that participants meet either all online or all in person. This may not be a practical solution for all teams. While advanced technology is a big part of what makes hybrid meetings successful, good design and team norms can make hybrid meetings effective for both online and in person participants.

Tips:

- [Priya Parker](#) says hybrid gatherings are three events in one. An in-person event, an online event, and the moments when the two are connected. Check out Priya's blog post [The New Art of Hybrid Gathering](#)
- As with all meetings, identify a clear purpose and ensure all participants have equal access to meeting agendas, notes and materials. Consider how files will be shared and stored.
- Enroll "hosts" in both the online and in-person formats to play specific roles that engage, support, and connect participants. This is especially important when only a few participants are online, and the majority are in a big room.
- Intentionally create moments of connection for or between the two groups. This could involve using breakout conversations online and simultaneous small group discussion in the room, or it could be asking in-person participants to use their phones or laptops to engage in the meeting chat. Be aware of which group is being privileged at any moment and be creative in how you design for both groups to be equally engaged.
- Adapt your team meeting norms for both online and hybrid situations.
- Consider booking a University Systems [Video Conferencing room](#) with advanced technology for support of hybrid meetings.
- If you would like to explore setting up your meeting room with advanced technology to better support hybrid meetings, University Systems can provide assessments and quotes. Equipping an average sized boardroom on campus with advanced technology for hybrid meeting support could cost \$10,000 or more.
- **Resources:** University Systems [Media Services](#) page for links to accessories, bookable rooms with hybrid meeting technology, and links to Zoom and Teams resources.

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TEAM MEETING NORMS FOR HYBRID OR ONLINE MEETINGS

Create your own Team Meeting Norms for online or hybrid meetings. These questions may help.

Attendance

- When are in-person meetings necessary? When are online preferred?
- When might hybrid meetings work for our team?
- Will an online option be available for in-person meetings if needed?
- How do we make and communicate decisions to change a meeting format (in-person to online, or online to in person)

Participation

- Do you expect videos to be on? When might it be okay to be off camera? How do you want attendees to communicate their needs?
- What options are there to request to speak? Hand up (using reactions) physical hand up on the screen? Posting request in the chat? Unmute and speak up? Select a few options for different styles.
- How will you monitor how participation time is shared fairly to allow all voices to be heard?
- Is it okay to call on people without notice? Is there an option to pass?

Meeting Etiquette

- Are pets/kids okay on screen?
- Are virtual backgrounds okay? If so, are they user's choice or UVic branded?
- Are fun filters appropriate? When? When not?
- What are our agreements for using the chat during meetings?
- Can meeting host mute participants when there is background noise?

Meeting Structures

- How will meetings be scheduled? Consider duration, frequency, and method of invitation
- What is our preferred meeting technology?
- How will agendas be created and distributed? How will expectations for meeting preparation be communicated?
- How will meetings be documented? Will they be recorded? Will someone take notes? How will this be shared?
- How will meeting records be managed and stored?
- Ensure regular meeting technology settings align with your team norms and intentions (chat settings, mute settings, permissions for sharing etc.)