

Best Practices for Web Conferencing: Audio and Video

Best Practices Overview

If you participate remotely in a video conference, follow these instructions to ensure the best experience:

- **Test internet connection and devices before the meeting**
- **Internet Connectivity:** For best connectivity, close other programs on your computer before connecting. If connecting from home, ask that others sharing your WiFi network refrain from using bandwidth-heavy applications like Zoom or Netflix for the duration of your conferencing session.
- **Sharing:** If having problems with connectivity, share video and use screenshare only when necessary, as these require proportionally higher bandwidth than using your microphone and sharing pre-loaded files.
- **Power Source:** Laptops are normally set up to conserve energy when running on battery power. For best performance on a laptop or tablet, plug in your device before connecting the conference session.
- **Audio:** A headset microphone will give those listening to you the best audio quality. Avoid connecting from locations with significant background noise (e.g. classrooms, coffee shops) when possible.
- **Arrive early:** This will allow time to troubleshoot, should any problems arise.
- **Follow the instructions:** Each conferencing platform has slightly different requirements. These will often be noted in the conference invitation or welcome/join screen.
- **Have a backup plan:** Create a backup communication plan in case you have trouble connecting with remote participants, e.g. asking onsite participants to connect to the meeting through their laptops, using a mobile or speakerphone, and/or collaborating through an alternative online collaboration tool (e.g. Microsoft Teams).
- **Use supported software/devices:** Make sure that the software (browser or app) you are using is supported by the videoconferencing platform and keep it up to date.

Troubleshooting

The most common reasons for poor audio and video in a web conferencing session are:

1. [Poor Internet Connectivity](#)
2. [Incorrect Device Set-Up](#)
3. [Web Conferencing Platform's Settings](#)

If you experience any audio or video issues, it is advised that you troubleshoot in the above order.

Internet Connectivity

A common factor of an unsuccessful web conferencing session is a poor or unreliable internet connection. This is a common occurrence when relying on WiFi.

There are many factors that can cause a poor or unreliable connection: living in areas with poor internet connection reliability (i.e. rural areas), connecting to a large session, multiple members of a household relying on the same WiFi connection, etc. To avoid and/or mitigate connection issues we have put together some best practices and tips for you to have a successful web conferencing session

- **Close all other programs** on your computer (especially bandwidth-heavy programs: other web conferencing software, email, streaming services).
- **Turn off Wi-Fi for any other devices** during your meeting (phones, tablets, etc.) during your session if connecting with WiFi.
- **Share video and use screenshare only when necessary** as these take up a lot of your bandwidth rather than just using your microphone and uploading files.

Device Set-Up

- **Audio:**
 - Ensure that you have a microphone and headphones/speakers available.
 - Most modern laptops and all-in-one desktops have a headphone jack, microphone, and speakers built in.
 - Separate your “Audio In” (microphone), from your “Audio Out” (speaker)
 - If your microphone picks up the audio from your speaker you will have audio problems.
 - Microphone earbuds or headphones are preferable to avoid audio feedback and echo.

- Regular (non-microphone) earbuds can be used for your speaker and another device for your microphone (computer microphone or external microphone).
- Video
 - Check to make sure your device has a built-in camera or that your external camera is connected to your computer.
 - Ensure no other programs are using your camera.
 - If you have multiple cameras, ensure that you have selected the correct device.
 - Make sure your computer allows application to use the camera.
 - [Windows 10](#)
 - [Mac](#)
 - Open camera app to ensure camera is working correctly. If not, you will need to contact IT support.

Platform Settings and Best Practices

Zoom

- **Test your video and audio** before your meeting:
 - zoom.us/test
 - Settings > Audio Settings > Test Speaker / Test Mic
 - Settings > Video > Adjust these settings until satisfied with video preview
- Adjust Audio Settings
 - If using headphones make sure that the correct devices are selected from the drop-down menus for both “Speaker” and “Mic”.
 - Automatically adjust microphone volume
 - Suppress background noise
 - Typing, papers shuffling, etc.
 - Default is “auto” but can be changed up to “high” if needed
 - Echo Cancellation
 - Found under “Advanced” in the audio settings
 - Reduces feedback/echo
 - Default is “auto” but can be changed to “aggressive” if needed
- Review the [Participant Controls](#) available to you in a meeting
 - Start your audio and video.
 - Make sure your displayed name is correct.
 - Access the chat window.
 - Start sharing your screen for presentations.
 - Communicate issues or feedback to host and presenter using meeting reactions, nonverbal feedback, and “Raise Hand.”
- Breakout Rooms
 - [Joining Breakout Rooms](#) for participants
 - [Managing Breakout Rooms](#) for hosts.

Blackboard Collaborate

To insure you have a successful meeting:

- Use **Chrome browser** – This allows for the best experience, but **Firefox** is also a viable option.
 - **Keep your browser current.** Only use up-to-date Internet [browsers that are supported by Blackboard Collaborate](#).
 - Troubleshooting:
 - [Chrome Support](#)
 - [Firefox Support](#)
- **Limit video use.** Use video during the session only when necessary.
- **Use supported mobile browsers.** If on a mobile device, [use a supported mobile browser](#). For the best experience, use Safari on iOS devices and Chrome on Android devices.
- **Disable Adblockers.** Browser Adblockers can turn off your audio and video and can cause buttons to not show up.
- Tutorial: [Joining a Session and Setting Up Your Audio and Video](#)

Microsoft Teams

- **External users who do not have Teams must use the browser version of Teams.**
 - Use Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge browsers.
- Browse the [Quick Start Guide](#) created by KUMC IT.
- Set up your audio and video before joining.
 - Only use video when necessary to limit the strain on your internet bandwidth.
- For more resources visit the KUMC [Microsoft Teams](#) page on myKUMC.