Using Zoom™ to host video calls and webinars

Zoom is an online communications platform used to host video calls and to deliver webinars. Whilst there are a number of paid-for plans offered by Zoom, its free plan offers a range of features and functions that can be used in an educational setting.

The Basics

In order to initiate a video call or webinar using Zoom the primary user (e.g. the academic, personal tutor or seminar leader) needs to create a free account in advance. To do this, go to zoom.us and click ‘Sign Up, It’s Free’ in the top right hand corner of the screen. In the field provided (1), enter your email address and click ‘sign up’ (2).

You will now receive an email. You will need to confirm your email by clicking on the account activation button within the email; doing so will then return you to the Zoom website where you will be asked to enter your name and a suitable password. Once you have done this, you will see your personal meeting URL on screen; this is the URL that your participants will use to access any video calls or webinars when you start an instant meeting. Note: You don’t need to remember the personal meeting URL as you can retrieve it at any time by clicking on the profile icon in the top right hand corner of the screen (3).

Technical Requirements

In order to run a video call or a webinar you will need, as a bare minimum:

- A web-enabled device (PC, laptop, tablet, smartphone)
- Capability to record audio (microphone)
- Capability to hear audio (speakers or headphones)

Zoom will run natively within any web browser and has mobile apps available for use on iOS or Android. You can also install the Zoom Desktop Client Software if you wish.

Note: Participants do not need a Zoom account to participate in a video call or webinar, however, like the presenter (or meeting host), they do require a web-enabled device and, as a bare minimum, the ability to hear audio.

Setting up a meeting or webinar

To schedule a meeting, go to https://zoom.us/meeting/schedule and log in. On the page that follows you will be asked to add some details about the meeting or webinar (e.g. Topic [meeting name], date and duration). Note that Zoom’s free plan offers a 40 minute maximum on any meeting or webinar.

You can specify whether a meeting ID is generated automatically or whether you’d like to use your personal meeting ID (4). You also have the ability to specify whether users need a password to access the meeting and can tailor both the host and participant video settings (5). Finally, you can specify whether participants can join via computer audio, via telephone or both (6).

Choose the settings accordingly and click ‘save’ at the bottom of the screen.
You will now be taken to a summary page where you will see the details for your meeting or webinar (see figure 1, below)

![Figure 1 - Zoom meeting summary](image)

The ‘Join URL’ (7) can now be copied and sent to the meeting/webinar participants. This is the URL that your participants will use to access your meeting/webinar; it is good practice to share this to participants in advance.

You can follow the above steps to schedule further meetings. To see a list of all scheduled meetings, click on the profile icon (8) in the top right corner of the screen and then, on the page that follows, choose ‘meetings’ from the menu on the left.

**Starting a scheduled meeting/webinar**

On or shortly before the given meeting time, access the Join URL within your web browser.

If you have installed the Zoom Desktop Client Software, you will see a pop-up window appear asking if you’d like to launch the Zoom software. If you do not have the Zoom Desktop Client Software installed and would like to run the meeting from your web browser, click ‘cancel’ (9).

In order to force your browser to run the Zoom meeting/webinar, you will need to click ‘if nothing prompts from browser, click here’ (10) and then repeat step 9 above. Now you will see a link appear on screen to ‘start from your browser’ (11).

Depending on the audio settings you specified when scheduling the meeting, you will be asked whether you’d like to join the meeting via computer audio or via telephone. Click ‘Join Audio by Computer’.

The meeting interface will now open. You will join the meeting/webinar as host and will therefore have overall control over what is shared by you and the participants.
Along the bottom of the screen you will see various controls that you can use to run the meeting/webinar. There are controls for muting your microphone and sharing/disabling your webcam video (12). The ‘invite’ button (13) enables you to invite additional participants whilst the meeting is taking place.

Clicking on ‘manage participants’ (14) will open a side-panel enabling you, as host, to see all participants in the meeting, along with controls for muting the participant or removing them from the meeting/webinar altogether.

Clicking the ‘share screen’ option (15) will display a pop-up window allowing you to specify which aspects of your screen to share. You are able to share an entire screen or a specific application window.

Clicking the dropdown menu next to the ‘share screen’ option and then choosing ‘advanced sharing options’ enables you to control who can share their screen in the meeting.

The ‘chat’ button (16) enables users to type messages into a chat window. This is particularly useful for sharing hyperlinks with participants.

To leave and end the meeting/webinar, click ‘leave meeting’ (17).

Starting an instant meeting/webinar
If you’d like to start a meeting instantly (without scheduling) simply share your personal meeting URL (see step 3 on page 1 of this guide) and then follow steps 9, 10 and 11 above.

Joining a meeting
If you are a participant in a meeting/webinar (e.g. a student), access the meeting/webinar URL shared by the academic, personal tutor or meeting host. Zoom will run natively within any web browser and has mobile apps available for use on iOS or Android. You can also install the Zoom Desktop Client Software if you wish.

If you have installed the Zoom Desktop Client Software, you will see a pop-up window appear asking if you’d like to launch the Zoom software. If you do not have the Zoom Desktop Client Software installed and would like to run the meeting from your web browser, click ‘cancel’ (18).

In order to force your browser to run the Zoom meeting/webinar, you will need to click ‘if nothing prompts from browser, click here’ (19) and then repeat step 18 above. Now you will see a link appear on screen to ‘start from your browser’ (20).
Depending on the audio settings you specified when scheduling the meeting, you will be asked whether you’d like to join the meeting via computer audio or via telephone. Click ‘Join Audio by Computer’.

It is often good practice to mute your microphone when not contributing as background noises can affect the listening experience for other participants. If you are asked to share your screen, ensure that no personal information is being displayed to other participants (e.g. emails).