

Video conferencing checklist for teachers



When you're accustomed to doing things a certain way, a drastic change can be intimidating. Conducting lectures or seminars virtually is no exception.

To help reduce stress, improve efficiency, and avoid dreaded technological issues, RingCentral has composed a handy checklist of actions you may want to take before, during, and after a video conference.

Before the conference

Know the technology. This should be done before everything else. Do you know how to use the platform? How to mute yourself or others? How to screen share? To troubleshoot common technological issues? To form breakout rooms? You needn't be a tech wizard, but you should have a basic understanding of the platform's main functions.

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Arrive early. Fifteen minutes should be fine.

Test the camera. How do you look? Ensure the camera angle and lighting make you look sufficiently professional.

Test the audio. How do you sound? Is your voice transmitting effectively?

Cancel notifications. You know the cheerful ding! that signals a newly arrived email or text message? Make sure that's turned off. If you plan on screen sharing at any point, you should eliminate visual notifications as well.

During the conference

Configure the setup. Can you see everyone? Can everyone see each other? Does the screen change depending on who's speaking, or is a single screen pinned as the main one?

Do a sound check. Ensure everyone can be heard. Alternatively, you may ask students to mute their screens when not speaking.

Establish a protocol. How should students signal they have questions? Will they activate a "handwave" motion? Perform a physical gesture? Write it in the chat? Should everyone have their screens active, or are they allowed to switch them off? Make sure everyone is on the same page.

Consider breaks. Long sessions spent staring at screens are exhausting. If your seminar runs over an hour, consider the occasional ten-minute break for coffee, bathroom trips, and general downtime. It'll keep everyone fresh and make your remaining time more productive.

Evaluate participation. As the session goes on, check to see that everyone's had a chance to speak. It can be hard to ensure participation when some students aren't onscreen, or when their cameras are turned off; it may be helpful to have a list of students so you can keep track of who's spoken and who hasn't.

After the conference

Configure the setup. Present a plan for next time. Ensure everyone knows when the next session is and what the subject will be.

Ask for feedback. Are some students struggling to participate or to work their technological devices? Tell them to email you if they have any concerns.

Thank participants. Distance learning is difficult and exhausting. Make sure your students know you're all in the same boat! They'll appreciate your acknowledging it.

Assess your strategy. Did everything go smoothly for you? What kind of feedback did you get? You may need to tweak your strategy for next session.

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