

Delivering Effective Webinars

INTRODUCTION

This is one of a series of guides available from the [Teaching, Learning & Assessment with Technology series](#). Please note, your faculty may have other approaches or use different tools, contact your [Faculty TEL Officer](#) for more information on local provision.

There are a variety of tools available to host and deliver webinars. Webinars can be useful for presenting information or facilitating collaboration and discussion in real time but where participants are at a distance from each other.

Regardless of the delivery tool, the below should be considered to ensure your webinar is engaging and effective.

Planning an engaging session:

1. What are the session learning outcomes?

As is best practice for a face-to-face teaching session, defining the learning outcomes for a fully online session will help you plan and deliver an effective webinar.

2. Is an icebreaker required?

This would depend on how interactive you want your webinar to be. For the very first webinar in a series of online sessions, you may ask your students to introduce themselves and what they would like to get out of the course. You could ask students to speak or to contribute using a chat feature.

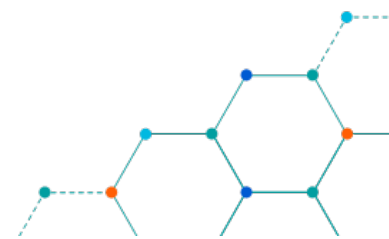
3. What information do you want to convey?

This will be influenced by your session learning outcomes. Avoid duplicating what is covered elsewhere in the course, such as videos or discussion boards.

As with a face-to-face session there should always be a reason to attend the session in case something important is missed.

4. What activities/discussion do you want the participants to have?

Activities such as quiet reflection time do not translate well to online classrooms, and long periods of silence are best avoided in an online setting. It's best to explore the tools and functionality of your online classroom tool and adapt your activities to suit them.



If you want to propose thought provoking questions, give participants a moment to compose and write their thoughts.

5. How and when do you want participants to speak?

Plan for periods of interactivity with your students and avoid sessions that involve you talking for extended periods of time. You may want your students to type answers to questions in the chat function, or to speak.

6. How and when do you to engage with the participants - is this one or two way?

It may be that it's not appropriate for participants to talk during your session, especially if it's a large session with a high number of participants.

Most webinar tools come with polls, chat functions, and other interactive features. Try to have your students doing, typing, or saying something every 3 minutes.

7. How can you get feedback from your participants in the live environment?

Polls are a great way to get feedback during your session. You can use them to check learning as you progress through the session.

Tips:

1. Don't use a mobile device or a tablet, opt for laptop or PC.

Adding in features such as polls and editing other settings will be easier and faster to do on a laptop or desktop.

2. Make sure you have a strong internet connection, don't use mobile data.

Ideally you would use a wired connection to the Internet to reduce the risk of any interrupted signal. This isn't always possible due to the ease and prevalence of Wi-Fi.

3. Use a headset with a microphone.

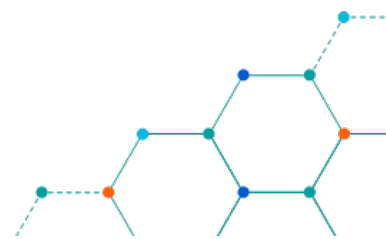
A headset with an inbuilt microphone will keep that microphone at a regular distance from your mouth, ensuring that the volume of your voice remains constant.

4. Test your equipment before your session.

AUDIO PLAYBACK:

<https://www2.iis.fraunhofer.de/AAC/multichannel.html>

If you can hear these sounds, your equipment and computer is working fine.



MICROPHONE TESTS:

http://toolster.net/mic_test

<https://www.onlinemictest.com/>

<https://www2.iis.fraunhofer.de/AAC/multichannel.html>

VOICE RECORDER & PLAYBACK:

<https://online-voice-recorder.com/>

5. Avoid bright lights/windows behind you and use quiet spaces.

Bright lights and windows behind you will dazzle students who are watching you through a webcam. Ensure the light source is in front or to the side of you.

Ideally, find a quiet space to deliver your webinar so your participants can hear you clearly.

6. Speak up and stay calm.

Things can go wrong during a webinar, just as they can go wrong during a face-to-face session. For example, a participant's connection can drop, the wrong poll could be displayed, or an activity may not work out the way you expected. It may be harder to quickly improvise an alternative in an online session, but the key advice is to keep calm and to speak up. Explain what has gone wrong, try to fix the issue, and move on if you need to.

7. Open your seminar room at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.

This will allow students to ensure they have managed to fix any issues before joining the session. This time can also be used as a general social space, just as it would be in a physical classroom, which allows social barriers to be broken down.

