Accessible Remote Working Guide for BSL interpreters, deaf and hearing participants.

- Technical and physical limitations mean virtual meetings cannot operate in the same way as face-to-face meetings. For full participation and inclusion consider shortening meeting length, implement effective turn taking (vital), and be mindful of problems with individual internet connections.
- This guide focuses onto deaf-hearing BSL-English interactions in remote meetings. Remote working will impact on the access of other disabled people, for further information please refer to guidance compiled by the UCL Disability Equality Steering Group; [Click here for UCL Disability Equality Steering Group (DESG) Guidance]
- These guidelines should be adapted to the needs and preferences of individuals.
- Please note there are likely to be revisions and updates so these guidelines are work in progress.

This guidance can be shared externally but the ‘UCL Deafness, Cognition and Language (DCAL) Research Centre’ must be credited.

Prior to meeting
- Test, test, test if possible!
- Send as much advance preparation materials as possible e.g. agenda, minutes, slides and THIS guide.

Interpreted meetings
- Begin the meeting with everyone visible on camera. (use Gallery View if using Zoom)
- Chair:
  - introduce themselves and the interpreters
  - explains how the meeting will work (these guidelines)
  - appoint designated persons to be visible on camera (i.e. chair & ‘active visible’ interpreter)
  - asks everyone else to turn their video and audio off. Note: Reducing audio & visual clutter supports easier visibility and focus for all, helps internet bandwidth issues and effective chairing and turn-taking.
- Unless you are a deaf sign language user, use spoken English during meetings to make modality switching easier and free up bandwidth
- Only turn on your video &/or audio and raise your hand if you want to contribute
  - Wait until chair has given the go-ahead before you start to contribute, turn your video off once you finish.

TIPS for Zoom users:
Pin a video to make a certain person’s video screen larger on your screen (i.e. chair or interpreter)
[Click here for Zoom guidance]
Tips for Interpreters:

- Co-worker to turn on video when they are ready to swap. ‘Active’ interpreter to indicate on video when swap is imminent so that those viewing the interpreter can have time to adjust (‘pin’ on Zoom) settings.
- Include participant’s name when starting to interpret for a new contributor.
- Use the chat function to support ‘feeding’ to co-worker instead of feeding verbally as this could distract minute-taker/chair and other participants accessing the active participant.
- Have on hand a secondary mode of audio communication for feeding e.g. main meeting in one ear and audio feed in second ear
- You may want to consider using live captions (MS Teams has good quality live captions) to support misheard/missed information

Non-interpreted meetings

BSL used throughout the meeting, if BSL user(s) are present.

Depending on how many people are in the meetings, it may be workable to have everyone visible on video. The chair should follow much of the above guidance (Interpreted meetings).

1. On joining the meeting, microphone on mute but camera on.
2. Once meeting starts, chair asks everyone else to switch off cameras... only chair is visible.
3. If the Chair asks you a question or you want to contribute, turn your camera on.
4. Wait until the chair invites you to start contributing.
5. If more than one person wants to contribute, Chair will indicate order of contributions. Chair to ask contributors to turn off camera off until their turn.
6. Contributor turns camera off again as soon as they finish.
7. Meetings conducted in BSL with participants of varying fluency – the chair/designated fluent BSL user is responsible for repeating/clarifying contributions as needed. Note: Only recommended for occasional clarifications, where more regular translations as required, an interpreter should be used.

GENERAL NOTES:

- Reinforce eye breaks for ALL (cameras off supports this reducing multiple visibility and distractions) as individuals may have to deal with multiple screens and could be restricted in where they are positioned in their homes due to strength of internet connection
- Issue more regular breaks; for meetings over 1 hour, a break every 30 mins.
- Virtual meetings with mixed modalities can be challenging. Everyone should watch the interpreter who will indicate if the contributor needs to hold/slow down for smoother information relay, for adjusting technical settings (i.e. pinned video settings) or if there is a technical breakdown.
- There are delays in relaying between BSL-English and English-BSL, Deaf BSL users often fall behind in receiving information. Chair must ensure inclusive practice throughout the meeting.
- ONLY interrupt if it is URGENT – e.g. if interpreters miss information or if internet connection fails.
- Consider including live captions (e.g. MS Teams). Note: ALL participants should be aware that the participant(s) using captions have a lag in receiving information compared to those directly receiving information audibly.
  
  TIP: Ensure good pacing of dialogue so that everyone can have an opportunity to contribute.
- For an extensive guide to accessibility tips for Zoom and other virtual meetings please [click here](#)